

THE
SOPHISTRY 4016 d
OF BOTH
THE FIRST AND SECOND PART OF
MR PAINE'S AGE OF REASON;
OR,
A RATIONAL VINDICATION
OF THE
HOLT SCRIPTURES
AS
A POSITIVE REVELATION FROM GOD
WITH
The Causes of Deism.
IN
FOUR SERMONS.

BY
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We have also a MORE SURE WORD of Prophecy. PROPHECY came
NOT in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke as
they were MOVED by the HOLY GHOST.—PETER.

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1796.



DEDICATION.

TO all the LOVERS of TRUTH, and of the
LORD JESUS,—particularly to his BRETHREN
in the MINISTRY, and the MEMBERS of his
OWN CONGREGATION, This Second Edition
of The SOPHISTRY of the *Age of Reason*
is Inscribed by the

AUTHOR.

STOCKPORT. }
Jan. 27. 1796. }

N. B. All the References in the 1st, 3d,
and 4th Sermons, are to the *First Part* ; and
all the References in the 2d Sermon, are to
the *Second Part of the Age of Reason*.

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SERMON I.

THE DIVINITY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

On 2 Tim. iii. 16.—*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*

THE works of God are infinitely superior to the best imitations of them by the hand of man. If we examine the *point* of the finest needle by the microscope, it appears about a quarter of an inch broad : but if we look at the *sting* of a bee through the same glass, its *point* is so fine that we cannot discover it. The *apparent* diameter of the sun is no more than a foot long ; but his *real* diameter is 763,000 miles. Such striking considerations ought to overawe the human mind ; they ought to inspire it with a *holy delicacy*, and make us *very* cautious how we pronounce as to any of the divine productions. It hath been owing to the *want* of this delicacy, that some men, in every age, have not only thought *unworthily* of the *works of God*, but they have ventured to rise up and to quarrel with *his word*. Though the gospel comes attested by the most *god-like credentials* ; though it shines clearly to the conviction of all, like the
sun

sun in his meridian splendour, some men will not see it : instead of recognizing it as a revelation from God, they have either tried to *fritter* down the evidence of the gospel, like *Gibbon, Hume, and Voltaire* ; or, like *Mr Thomas Paine*, renounced it altogether as imposture and *fabulous*. Such persons existed in the times of Moses, and also in the times of PAUL : So the apostle says to Timothy, in the context, *Now, as JANNES and JAMBRES withstood Moses, so do THESE also resist the truth*. But though *evil men shall wax worse and worse, deceiving others, and being deceived themselves*, they cannot change the *truth* of God into a *lie*. And after all the * *sophistry* employed by MR PAINE on the one hand, and ridicule on the other, it is a glorious and eternal reality what Paul says to Timothy, in the words of the text, that *All scripture is given by inspiration of God*. By *scripture* in this text, we are to understand the *doctrines* contained in the *Old and New Testament*. This is limited by the apostle himself in the 15th ver. *when he styles them the HOLY SCRIPTURES*, and in this way distinguishes them as inspired

* The word *sophistry* is a general expression for *false reasoning*, or reasoning without principle. The whole of Mr Paine's arguments against the divinity of the scriptures, are *literal sophisms*. The greater part of his book is *mere assertion*. Sometimes he *mistakes*, and sometimes he *begs* the question. Sometimes he raises the reader's hope ; but, he goes *about the bit* and *about the bit*, but *never upon the bit*, and disappoints him in the end by *reasoning in a circle*. This is not bold and daring assertion ; for, as I am frequently to take *Mr Paine* in my way, I shall make it out by a *clear and satisfactory induction* of particulars. I shall produce instances of all these different kinds of *sophisms*, in his own words, from his *Age of Reason*.

spired from all other writings whatever.—In these four sermons, and taking them one with another, I shall attend to the following plan.

I. Prove that the holy scriptures are an *inspired* and a *standing revelation* from God to men.

II. Refute the objections brought by Mr Paine; and show, upon *his own principles*, that if the Bible is *not true*, no *Deist* can vindicate the moral justice of God.

III. Assign the *causes of deism*; or shew from what *principles in human nature* it hath happened, that when the evidence of the gospel is so clear and strong, some in every age have pretended to deny it. And,

IV. Offer a *few directions*, which all Christians ought to follow, if they would be faithful to God and divine truth, and guard their minds against the *showy*, but *hollow* arguments of infidelity.

But before proceeding to the formal discussion of this plan, I lay down the following *principles*, founded in reason, and I consider them of the greatest importance in the question about an *inspired revelation*:

1st, That an *inspired revelation* is POSSIBLE, for God can make it.

2^d, Such a revelation is DESIRABLE; for the wiseⁿ men among the heathen in all ages, especially in the history of the *Greek schools*, have felt themselves at a loss; they have wished the gods to interpose, and give them more light.

3^d, An *inspired revelation* is * NECESSARY; for, without it, man, even with the *volume of nature* before him, would

* Mr Paine (page 12.) says that the word of God is the CREATION
TION

would be equally ignorant of his *origin*, and of his *future destination*.

4th, Supposing God to make *such* a revelation, it must be **REASONABLE**: it must bear a *close analogy* to the *other*

revelation WHICH WE BEHOLD, and reckons any other revelation *unnecessary*. This reasoning is not conclusive; it proceeds on *partial views* of what is necessary to the happiness of man. The word of God in creation, is not sufficient to the happiness of man, even in this life. It would be of very great use to discover the way of finding the *longitude* by sea, and of making a *perpetual motion*: but there is no principle in the works of creation, at least as yet known to us, by which these *valuable* and *desirable* discoveries can be made. Though the creation manifests the *wisdom*, *power*, and *goodness* of God, it gives no *adequate* views of his *holiness*; nor how an *atonement* can be made for sin. DO NOT SMILE, YE DEISTS: for I appeal to *facts*, and facts are *stubborn* and *eternal* things. There *never* was a generation, nor an individual since the world began, but wished and tried to make an atonement to God, in one way or another. I do not speak of the atonement of Jesus Christ, for that is a *different* question. Now, how is it that the human mind is thus *naturally* set on making atonement? It is *begging the question*, to say, that men have been *cheated* into a belief of the necessity of it, by *priests* and *mythologists*; for this desire is *universal*: it is found in the history of the Tartar, the Hindoo, and the Samoid, who *never* heard of revealed religion and *priestcraft*. It is no answer to say, that *priests have cheated Christendom*: for after priests have sold *indulgencies* and *pardons*, they themselves have *trembled before* God, at the cheat, and could not be easy until they made atonement in some way for *their villainy*. This turns us *back* and *in* upon the fact, that a desire of atonement is *universal*; it is natural to the black and to the white, to the *priest* and to the *people*. This wish is a *strong presentiment* of a judgment to come, and also of man's *unfitness* to meet it: and as man is not taught by any thing in the creation how to make atonement, *some other* revelation must be *necessary* to his happiness.

other works of God ; it must *address* the *reason* of man, though it might contain *things above* our comprehension : like the works of creation, it must contain nothing *contrary* to our reason ; if it did, it would be setting man at *odds* with himself, and it would be equally unworthy of God to *sport* with the weakness, or *tantalize* the reason of man.

5th, If such a revelation as *that* now supposed were made, it must be *credible*. It would not leave man to doubt whether he should believe it or not. Such a doubt would be not only *rebellion* against God, but *blasphemy* against his own reason. It would be proclaiming himself a *fool*.

Having laid down these principles, I return to the plan by repeating the text, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God*. In other words, the holy scriptures contain a *reasonable* and *positive* revelation from God. They not only speak to the human heart, but they *address* the judgment ; they *appeal* to the reason of man ; they loudly call upon him to open his eyes to judge for himself ; they present him with every *desirable*, with every *reasonable*, with every *god-like credential* of their divinity.—In the discussion of this subject, I shall not take my arguments from scripture ; this would be a *begging* the question : like *Mr Paine*, it would be *taking for granted* what remains to be proved ; to use a *jockey* expression, it would not be *fair play*. I shall take all my arguments from *reason*, from *common sense*, and from the *philosophy* of human nature. I shall prove the divinity of the scriptures by the following induction :

- 1st, From the *sublimity* of the style, and the great *encouragement*

couragement which the scriptures give to the study of *science* and *philosophy*. As the works of God infinitely excel the mechanism of man, *reason says*, that, if God give an *inspired* revelation, it must be in a style superior to what is human ; he must give such discoveries of his *being, perfections, and ends*, as could not have entered into the mind of man *without* divine inspiration. Now, this demand of reason we find *fully* answered in scripture. The accounts which they give of God, are worthy of him : He is represented as * ONE GOD ; as the Father and

* *Mr Paine* (page 1. and 2.) makes his profession of faith, 1. In the *unity* of God ; 2. In the *equality* of man ; 3. That *religion* lies in *mercy* to our fellow-creatures : 4. In the *immortality* of the soul : and yet he declares that he does not believe the *creed* of the *Protestant* church, nor the *Bible* revelation. What sophistry is this ! These doctrines believed by *Mr Paine*, are not only professed by all the Protestant churches, but *Mr Paine* could never have known them fully without the Bible. The *unity* of God, indeed, may be inferred by reason from *final causes* ; but I defy *Mr Paine* to point out one instance in the history of mankind, where any individual arrived at a confirmed belief of the unity of God, without having some intimation of it from scripture. *Socrates* is the most remarkable instance ; he was put to death by the *Athenians* because he denied a *plurality*, and professed the *unity* of God : but *Socrates* himself was not *firm*, for he caused a cock to be sacrificed to *Esculapius*, the god of physic, a little before his death. The *equality* of man is a *Bible* doctrine : if we confine our views to society, the idea of a father would, for a time at least, always suggest the idea of inferiority in the son : and, *vice versa*, when the son arrives at manhood, and the father declines both in *mental* faculties and *bodily* powers the son becomes superior to the father. But the Bible puts father and son, black and white, on the same level. *God hath made of ONE BLOOD ALL NATIONS of men : the kings of the Gentiles exercise dominion*

and preserver of the universe; as omniscient, omnipresent; as abhorring every thing sinful and immoral. When the *heathen authors* give us an account of *their gods*, they represent them *confined* in their government to *particular provinces*, as *clashing* with one another, as *dependent* on men; but the *Bible writers* give us such vast conceptions of God, as could only be inspired by God himself: *Do not I fill heaven and earth? Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; God measures the waters in the hollow of his hand, he meteth out the heavens with a span; he weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.*

Man is naturally apt to measure God by himself. This we find verified in fact; for the best profane authors give no better account of their gods. *Homer* hath been justly admired for his *sublimity*, and *Virgil* for the *majesty* of his style; but their *theology* is *gross* and *creeping*, and altogether unworthy of God. *Mercury* is represented as a *thief*, *Neptune* as *outrageous*, and the *great Jupiter* as an *adulterer*; all the other gods and goddesses as the subjects

nion over them; but it shall not be so among you. Call no man master, for all ye are brethren. This does not clash with lawful subjection to the powers that be; for though the Bible calls upon us to pay taxes, it is left to the *reason* of man, upon the *principles of society*, to say *how much*. When the Greeks sacked Troy, they set it on fire in the night-time, and it was by the light of the burning city that the Greeks put so many Trojans to death: and it is by the light of revelation, though he does not know it, that Mr P. hath been enabled to muster sophistical arguments against it. What children must the admirers of *The Age of Reason* be, to be thus juggled out of their reason by Mr P. affirming and denying the same thing in two different expressions!

subjects of the meanest vices. But what say the Bible writers? *O my God, mine holy One, thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; he will by no means clear the guilty.* The Bible too, of all other books, is the most favourable to science; it calls on man to study God in his works of creation and providence. *The invisible things of God (says Paul to the Romans) are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead.* In the writings of Galileo, in the works of Sir Isaac Newton, in the discoveries of Herchel, we are only told what they have seen; but they have no authority to command our attention. But the Bible not only tells us that *the works of the Lord are wonderful*, but it calls upon us, by the most endearing and awful considerations, to study God in them; it promises every advantage to those who do; for *Who so is wise and will observe these things, they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.* It denounces awful threatenings against those who do not, *Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his hands, therefore he will destroy them, and not build them up.* There is scarcely a creature in the whole creation of God, but it is introduced into the scripture; and man, *vain man*, is called to learn instruction from it. We are sent to the *ant*, to learn *diligence*; to the *ox* and *ass*, to learn *obedience* and *gratitude*: we are sent to the *serpent*, to learn *wisdom*; and to the *dove*, for *simplicity* and *innocence*. What unphilosophical rant, then, is it in itself, what ignorance does it discover of the scriptures, and what an insult is it to the reason of man, for Mr P. to assert (pages 26. and 46.) that "*the Christian system of faith*

faith is a sort of religious denial of God," and that "it forms itself only on the idea of one world" The Bible announces a plurality of worlds: thousands of years before 1610, when Galileo invented the first telescope, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. By the word of the Lord were the heavens, i. e. the sun, moon, and stars, made, and all the hosts of them, by the breath of his mouth.* But the scripture not only announceth a plurality of worlds, but even suggests the idea of the earth's *sphericity*, and that long before the discovery of the laws of *attraction, repulsion, and gravitation*, by Sir Isaac Newton. God (says Job, chap. 26.) *hangereth the earth upon nothing.* This expression plainly holds out the earth under the idea of a large ball or globe suspended in the air, surrounded by the heavens on all sides, and not supported by any adjacent body. What can be the meaning of this striking and sublime analogy between the Bible and the works of God? How is it, that when nature invites us by her charms, the Bible should urge us by its promises and commands to *study her*? for, though other writings may describe the works of God, they do not pretend, like the Bible, to command us to study God in them. Why this peculiarity distinguishes the Bible from all other compositions; it shews it to be a book entirely *sui generis*: it is nature presenting herself before the glass of revelation; it is nature waving with the hand to the human race; it is nature resounding in the ear, and to the reason of man, that, *All scripture is given by * inspiration of God.*

2d, From .

* By inspiration I do not mean, and the apostle cannot intend
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2d, From a great variety of god-like miracles; reason and common sense say, that if God make any revelation of himself by one man, or by any number of men, he must give some sign, by which such persons may be known as the messengers of God: without this, the reason of man would be insulted, the world would lie open to the grossest fraud and imposition; every enthusiast might start up, and canonize the *fumes* of an overheated imagination, the *reveries* of his own mind, as the oracles of God. Without signs, men could not distinguish between the *visionary fanatic* and the anointed and *god-sent* prophet. So we read, that Moses would not run with his *ipse dixit* and his *probabilities*, like Mr P. among the French: he sought a sign, and the Lord gave him one, by turning his rod into a serpent. The Jews would not be the dupes of a blind credulity, but asked a sign of Jesus Christ. In later times, *Montanus*, *St Francis*, *Peter the Hermit*, *Mrs Leeke*, and *Mrs Buchan*, have all been justly discarded and reprobated as visionaries, by the common sense of mankind, because they gave no sign.—Now, this reasonable demand of signs or miracles, is given by God to the Bible revelation. Moses' wonders in Egypt were of this kind; his administration in the

in the text, every word within the boards of the Bible; for it requires no inspiration to say, *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. The clock that I left at Troas bring with the books, but especially the parchments.* But though this be granted, and it would be unworthy of God to give an inspired and miraculous revelation of what man can discover by reason, it is no argument, as Mr Paine would make it, against the Bible; it is no argument against the revealed doctrine of the fall and recovery, which man could never have learned from the works of creation.

the wilderness was a system of miracles. When the prophet *Elijah* was sent in the name of God, and it was at a time when the knowledge of God was nearly lost in Palestine, he gave signs. The prophet might have availed himself of the *ignorance* of the people as a *mean* of the grossest imposition; but this prophet confirmed the divinity of his mission, by bold and repeated appeals to visible and existing facts: he shut up the heavens, and they rained not; he opened the heavens, and they gave rain; he brought down fire from heaven, upon the enemies of God, in the sight of thousands. The New Testament is *full* of miracles wrought both by the Lord Jesus in person, and also by the hands of his apostles.

These miracles were wrought *publicly*; they were wrought *daily*, and for a long time; they were wrought in towns and in villages: thousands of enemies attended to detect the fraud and imposition, if there had been any. Many of them were wrought by a *word* spoken, and at a distance from the scene of the miracle, as in the case of the *nobleman's* son. They were not wrought to support a * *State* religion, but to confirm a doctrine which

* The *indignant asperity* with which *Mr Paine* writes against the Bible is owing to one great mistake; to his confounding Christianity, and the national establishments of it. His mind appears to be so completely soured and fretted at priestcraft, that, like an *enraged* animal, he *snaps* and *bites* at every thing indiscriminately that comes in his way. He very unphilosophically and absurdly puts the *villainy* of priests to the account of religion; it would be just as philosophical to say, that the sun is accountable for the crimes which men commit under his light. *Christianity*, and the *abuses* of it, are *diametrically* opposite, and *eternally* different.

which opposed it. The subjects of the miracles lived many years after they were healed, and attested the truth of them; and thousands who had been eye-witnesses of them, who had no reason to cheat themselves, or to impose upon others, actually renounced the *sweets* of domestic quiet, their *property*, and at last their *lives*, in bearing testimony to this miraculous system.

It is *no* objection to these miracles, that they were not wrought in the sight of Mr P.; they were wrought to confirm a revelation which respects him and all mankind: and when the human mind is left to itself, when it is not under the influence of a positive enmity against God, when it is not *warped* by prejudice or *blinded* by interest, the miracles of the gospel are so numerous, glorious, and overpowering, as to flash and inspire a happy conviction. The Jew and the Gentile have joined hands at the sight of their glory; they have bent the knee together, and fallen down before them. *We know* (says Nicodemus) *that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the works which thou dost, except God be with him.* In the Acts of the Apostles we are told, and, in one point of view, it is as great a miracle as is recorded in the New Testament, that *a great multitude* of the priests *were obedient to the faith.* When the poor idolaters at *Lystra* saw the cripple healed by *Paul*, they cried out in the speech of *Lycaonia*: *The gods are come down to us*
in

ent. It would be wicked in the extreme to ascribe the calamities of Europe, for these five years, to *certain* principles; and it is equally wicked to charge the abuses of men to the account of the gospel.

in the likeness of men.—Now, why hath God so often interposed? Why hath he been pleased to * *reverse* the

B *common*

* The supposition made by Mr Paine (page 50.) of a man ascending in a balloon, of extracting fire from the human body, &c. can in no sense come under the idea of a miracle. In all these instances there is only a *discovery* and *display*, but no *reversion*, of the laws of nature. The rising of the balloon is no more than a display of the law of *rarefied* air, compared with the law of common *atmospheric* air, and is the effect of a long and formal process. When a conductor, again, is applied to a cloud, or any other object charged with electric fire, it is the law of nature for the conductor to draw it off; but there is *no reversion* of any known law. In the instances, too, supposed by Mr P. there must be an actual *congression*; and without *this*, the law of each would not appear: but in most of our Lord's miracles, there was none. It is a law of nature for water to seek and to preserve a level; but it is a *reversion* of that law for water to rise up in heaps, as at the Red Sea, and Jordan, without coming into *visible contact* with any body, to displace them. It is a *law of nature* for a fig-tree to flourish and decay; but it is a *reversion*, or *arrest* of this law, for a fig-tree, in its richest state of verdure, to wither away at a word spoken, and in a moment. It is a *law of nature*, when a man is actually dead, when life is *extinct*, to continue so; but it is a *reversion* of that law to be raised to life, as was the case with *Lazarus*, and after his blood had gone into putrefaction. This contrast between the *display* and the *reversion* of the *laws of nature* shews, that, Mr Paine's supposition is not in point; it is a sophism; it is a *begging* the question as to the nature of miracles. Mr Paine (page 53.) discards miracles as unnecessary, because "moral principle speaks universally for itself." This is another gross sophism; it is an *ignorantia elenchi*, as to the intention of miracles. The great intention of miracles was not to confirm moral truth; a sense of moral truth is natural to man; for the *Gentiles*, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law. But miracles were intended to mark out, and confirm, the

common laws of nature? Why, these miracles are the finger of God pointing to my text; they loudly proclaim to all who hear of them, that *All scripture is given by inspiration of God.*

3d, From the exact fulfilment of scripture-prophecy. Miracles and prophecy are mutually dependent upon, and reciprocal evidences for, one another. As miracles were given to authenticate the divine mission of the prophets, and of Christ, at the time they spoke; so the prophecies, when fulfilled, not only authenticate themselves, but they are a proof that the miracles were no fraud or imposture. Reason says, that if man be an immortal being, and if God make a revelation of his will to man in this character, it must contain * prophecies of what he will do *for him, in him, and by him.*

Without

the divine mission of the prophets and of Jesus Christ; to alarm men as to the certainty of rewards and punishments, and to rouse them to the *practice of morality.* When John sent his disciples to Christ, it was not to be instructed in morality; for besides the intimations of a natural conscience, John had the law and the prophets: but it was with this question, *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* In that same hour Jesus performed many miracles; and then he addressed John's disciples, *Go, tell John what things ye see and hear; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed:* plainly pointing out his miracles as the credentials of his Messiahship, and of his mission from God. Mr Paine's account of the whale and Jonah, and our Lord's temptations, is a *whale of a quibble*; and if I could believe what Mr P. says, that "*Paul was a manufacturer of quibbles,*" I should also think, that as Paul is dead, Mr P. is advertising in his *Age of Reason*, that he intends to *carry on the business.*

* Lectures by Michelis on the New Testament.

Without such intimations, men would not know what to expect for the future, nor how they ought to conduct themselves for the present towards God and Providence. It is a reasonable expectation that God should foretel the time *when*, the person by *whom*, and the manner *how* he would deliver them. The Bible revelation foretels all these things in the most minute and circumstantial manner. The dispersion of the Jews was foretold by Moses; the two captivities in Babylon by Jeremiah; the deliverance was foretold by *Isaiah*, and * *Cyrus* mentioned by name 200 years before he was born. The person, the manner of his conception, the birth and fortunes of the Messiah, were foretold; the time when, and the place where, he was to be born; the nature of his kingdom, and the fate of his gospel and followers.—These prophecies have been, or are now fulfilling. The present dispersion of the Jews, with the loss of their genealogy, are an awful fulfilment of the prophecies of Moses and of Christ. In the personal history of Jesus Christ, we find no fewer than thirty-two different and particular prophecies mentioned by the evangelist Matthew, and all fulfilled in the most marked manner. Now, the fulfilment of these prophecies depended on a multitude of second causes, which *no* † human foresight could foresee, and no human power prevent. Jesus Christ prophesied his own appre-

B 2

hension

* Dr Playfair's Chronology.

† *Mr Paine* (page 14.) rejects prophecy, because the word *prophet* was used by the Hebrews for *poet*, or a *maker* or *player* of verses. This is another of *Mr Paine's* *sophisms*, by which he would dazzle the eyes and impose on the credulity of the ignorant;

for

hension and death; the time of his resurrection; the descent of his Spirit; the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans: and all these have been fulfilled.

If we compare Bible prophecy with the present state of the world, we may see the truth of it in the continued independence of the * *Arabs*. It is prophecied, that Ishmael, and the Arabs are his descendants, should be a *wild man*, and that he should *dwell in the presence of his brethren*. Now this prophecy is fulfilling in the present independence of that people: they have been attacked, but they have never been subdued. This is the more

for though the word rendered *prophet* was used among the Hebrews for *poet*, this will not prove that it never was used for what we call a *prophet*, or one who foretels future events. But the same word used for a poet, chiefly signified a *SEER*, and so it is explained, 2 Sam. ix. & 9. But the question is not about words and names, but about facts. It is of no importance whether the name of the man who built *St Paul's* in London, or the *Old Church* in Stockport, was *James* or *John*; it cannot affect the existence of these buildings, whether he was called an *architect*, or a *rope-dancer*: we know that such buildings were erected. In like manner, it cannot affect the truth of the prophecies, whether the Hebrew word, rendered *prophet*, was expressive of the office. *Mr Paine*, if he pleases, may say, that the word *prophet* originally signified a *Hammerman*, or a *Cotton-spinner*. But the question is, Did not *Moses*, *Isaiah*, *Daniel*, *Jesus Christ*, &c. foretel future events; and have not these events actually happened? This short question at once lays the "*Axe to the root*," to use *Mr Paine's* own words, by shewing that he plays with words, and consequently that all he advances against prophecy is not worth disputing about.

* I have compared the prophecies of *Moses*, uttered 3000 years ago, with the history of the Jews, his beloved, his favourite people; and am quite amazed to find them awfully fulfilled and fulfilling, in near 20 different instances.

more remarkable, that as the Arabs have been robbers and plunderers in every age, it is the interest of every conqueror to root them out. In the words of one of the Roman * historians, " The Arabs are such a sort of people, as one would not wish either for friends or foes." But, though all the conquerors, even *Alexander* himself, have tried it, they have never been † subdued.—The truth of prophecy also appears in the spread of the gospel by missionaries, by Methodists and others, to the East and West Indies, to the coast of Africa, and in the present declining state of antichrist.

Now, what is the meaning of all this? How can we account for it, that, after all the combinations by men against the gospel, by writing in private, and wars and persecutions in public, *prophecy*, like the sun in the midst of the greatest storms, should continue unshaken, should silently proceed in its fulfilment? The fact is open; and though we shut our eyes, that cannot alter it; why, *No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation; but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* In the words of the text, *All scripture is given by inspiration of God.*

I shall finish this particular, by repeating two awful scripture-prophecies; they respect not *deists* on the one hand, nor *believers* on the other, but they comprehend all mankind: I pray God that in his infinite mercy he may breathe on Mr Paine's soul and mine, and make us all ready for the fulfilment of them. *The Son of Man*

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*shall** *Tacitus.*† *Brown's Dictionary, Arabia.*

shall appear in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and before him shall be gathered all the nations of the earth. Then shall he say to the wicked, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels : To the righteous, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. AMEN, even so come, Lord Jesus.

4th, From the *moral tendency* of the scriptures, and their *fitness to promote the happiness of man*. Reason requires that if God make a revelation of his will to men, it ought to have such a tendency as to *better their condition, and promote their happiness* ; if otherwise, it would be *trifling* on the part of God, and altogether *superfluous and useless* to man. Now, the morality of the scriptures fully answer this expectation of reason : they require nothing but what is *for our good*, to perform even in this world ; and though there were no hereafter, they forbid nothing but what would be for our hurt, were we to do it.—Let us look into the different systems of *Confucius, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Plato, and Socrates*, and all the other moralists that ever lived, and we shall find them built on such a narrow and party scale, and so blended with superstition and the grossest absurdities, as sometimes to defeat their own end. *Other systems* of morality respect only *this or the other nation or state, this or the other sect* of philosophers ; but the morality

morality of the gospel respects all mankind. *Other systems* direct men only in *certain particulars* : but the morality of the gospel follows us into all the possible walks of personal, private, or public life ; it teacheth men to be *good husbands, good wives, good children, and good servants ; good subjects, and good magistrates*. The different systems of morality chiefly respect men in a *social capacity*, and direct their external conduct ; but the morality of the gospel addresses us as *individuals* ; it takes in our most *secret thoughts*, our motives and *ends*. Its great law respecting God is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart*. Its rule for society embraces the equality of man, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them*. Its law for the individual is equally careful of our bodily health, and of our peace of mind, *Be sober. Keep thy heart with all diligence*. *Other systems* of morality have no authority to enforce compliance ; but the gospel morality addresses the reason, as well as the heart of man, by the most endearing and tremendous sanctions. There is no book on earth so favourable to all the sublime and pure affections of the soul, and unfriendly to all the grovelling and destructive passions, as the Bible.

This is not the inflamed and high-sounding *rant* of an overheated imagination ; for we have seen the happy effects of the gospel, in the great and lasting changes which it hath produced. Every one knows, that, at the time particularly when Christ appeared, the whole world was lying in wickedness. When Paul came to Corinth, he found the morals of that famous city corrupt to the last degree : the people of that place were so abandoned,
that

that *Corinthiadsein*, or “to act the Corinthian,” was a proverbial expression for a very bad man. Here *Comus* held his court, and here pleasure swayed the sceptre. The Corinthians trod an * eternal round of voluptuousness and debauchery. *Be not deceived*, says the apostle, *neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor revilers, nor extortioners*. One can scarcely imagine a blacker catalogue, unless we were to receive it from the bottomless pit. But when this was their character, what a great change did the gospel produce; hear it from the apostle: *SUCH were some of you, but ye are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified in the name of our Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God*. Could any thing less than a religion from God produce such a great and happy change?—These Corinthians had seen, from their youth up, *Mr Paine’s* word of the *creation*, but they were no better; they had read former systems of morality, but their hearts were not changed; they had been initiated into all the mysteries of the heathen *mythology*, but their conduct was not reformed: but no sooner did they hear the gospel, than they became *new men*; the Corinthian † priests fled from their temples, and their oracles became dumb for ever.—But this influence of the gospel was not confined to Corinth: wherever the gospel came, it diffused the triumphs of piety to God; of justice and humanity to man. *The grace of God*, says Paul, and he gives it not as his own character, but as common to the first Christians, *teacheth us, that denying ungodliness* and

* Harwood’s Introduction to the New Testament.

† Blair’s Sermons.

and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Now, what shall we say to these things? What inference shall we draw from a morality so superior to all other in its *nature, extent, sanctions,* and astonishing *effects* on the minds of men? What shall we say of this morality which sounds in perfect unison with the dictates of natural conscience? I know what the enemies of revelation will say; they will cry, *Where was the morality of your gospel, when Rachel stole her father's images? When David went into Bathsheba, and then slew that magnanimous officer, Uriah? Where was the morality of your gospel, when Peter and Thomas denied their master? When Damas left the apostles, and the preaching of the gospel, for some secular employment?* But though all these things are true, they cannot, and do not affect the present question. What the gospel calls, and commands men *to be*, is one thing; what men *are*, is quite another: and *perfection* of moral character is *incompetent* to man while in this world.

There is, too, an eternal difference between the Bible giving us an *historical* account of the wickedness of bad men, and the errors and failings of good men, and *approving* of these. Indeed, it is one of the great proofs of the scripture being a divine revelation, that the writers of it candidly relate their own failings: they *confess* them before God; they *lament* before men. Whereas, in the history of *impostors*, they have always *concealed* their own vices, and flattered men's corruptions.—It is by not attending to this *marked* distinction, that Mr Paine (page 12.) speaks so *unworthily* of the Bible, and calls it the “*word of a demon.*” He confounds *historical* nar-
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ration with moral approbation ; he speaks as if the one implied the other, by charging the vices mentioned in scripture upon the scripture itself : if *crimes* had been mentioned, and not *punishments*, Mr Paine's reasoning, though not *conclusivus*, would have been more *specious*.— But by following up the history of national and particular sins, with the history of national and particular punishments, the sacred writers at the same time *clear* the moral government of God, and *set up* a beacon for the admonition and the good of mankind : *These things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Now all these things (says Paul most expressly) happened unto them, and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.*

Other systems of morality, on the principles of natural instinct, or civil interest, make provision for friends ; but the gospel morality bursts all these narrow bounds, and makes provision for enemies ; LOVE YOUR ENEMIES ; *bless them that curse you.*—How fully doth this shew the *sophistry* of Mr Paine in saying, that, “ *the word of God is the creation which we behold ;*” for where, in the whole creation, and without the Bible in our hand, can we meet with any thing like this precept ? It is true, our Lord illustrates the precept by the divine goodness ; by God *causing the sun to rise, and his rain to descend on the just and on the unjust.* But this is only *one part, one view* of the creation : if we were to form a conclusion here, we would be stopt short by *sea storms* and *earthquakes* ; by every kind of *disease* in the human body. And when we look at the most civilized nations, instead of love, we find them, in the dreadful language of the apostle,

apostle, *living in malice and in envy, hateful, and hating*, or, as the Greek word signifies, *WORRYING one another*. These facts sufficiently shew, that though, by the divine goodness, our Lord illustrates the precept, *Love your enemies*, the precept itself is *inspired*; it is *peculiar* to the Bible revelation: without the scriptures, it would not occur to the reason of man. This view of the genius and tendency of the gospel morality is a confirmation of the truth in my text, that *All scripture is given by inspiration of God*.

5th, From the great *diversity* of the character of the writers, and that *unity* of design which is preserved by the whole, *reason* says, that if God make a revelation of his will to men, by one man, or by ever so many different men, that revelation must be *consistent*; no part of it must break in upon, or unhinge the great design. Now, this expectation of reason is fully answered in scripture. The writers of it were men of very different characters and conditions: they lived in very different times; and even those who lived at the same time, lived in very different places; so that we cannot suspect them of any collusion. Some of them were *learned* men; as *Moses, Isaiab, Daniel, and Paul*. Some of them were *great* men; as *David, Solomon, and Hezekiab*. Some of them *illiterate* men; as the LORD CHRIST and his *apostles*. So Christ's hearers were astonished at his doctrine, and said, *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* When the Jewish Sanhedrim saw the *boldness* of Peter and John, and that they were *unlearned*, they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Now, how is it, that, in such a very great diversity of character and circumstances,

cumstances, these writers should preserve such a complete and *unbroken unity* of design? They all agree in giving the *same* account of God; of man; of the fall; of the way of recovery; of our moral duty to God, and to one another here; and of the certainty of a state of immortality beyond the grave. One would not wonder to see philosophers joining with philosophers to form a sect or party; it would be nothing wonderful to see *priests* of the same time, conspiring and *clubbing* with *priests* to *hoodwink* the people, and to cheat them out of their money. But to see so many different writers, of so very different characters and times, all agreeing in the same *great, common, and disinterested* design, can only be accounted for, from the *purity and unity* of that spirit by which they were inspired. Let us cast our eyes back over the page of history, and look for such an unity of design among any other class of writers. *Mr P.* may seek for it, but he will never find it. The *Greeks* at one time had no fewer than 30,000 gods: they were divided into almost as many opinions as to the SUMMUM BONUM, or *Chief Good*.—Now, how is it, that one set of wise men, or philosophers, should rise up after another, among the *Phœnicians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Greeks, and Romans*; and yet, let us put *all* their discoveries together, with *Mr Paine's Age of Reason* as a preface to them, and they will not make a book equal to the New Testament, written by a few illiterate fishermen*? No answer can be

* *Mr Paine* (page 16.) objects to the truth of the gospel, that Jesus neither wrote it himself, nor "*Procured it to be written,*" in his lifetime. But this is one of the strongest proofs of the divinity

be given to this but one, that *the world by wisdom knew not God*; and after this, *it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*. From this great diversity of character and unity of design, it fully appears, that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*.

6th, The wonderful *preservation* of the scriptures through so many ages and dangers, is a proof of their divinity. *Reason* says, that if God condescend to give an *inspired* revelation, his goodness must make provision for the preservation of it. Without this, it could only be useful for a time, and to a part of mankind: and this expectation is fully answered in the history of divine providence respecting the scriptures. Some of the *sacred* books are, of all others, the most ancient; and notwithstanding the enmity of mankind, all of them have been saved from such dangers and devastations as nothing else hath survived. *Empires* have risen and fallen: death hath carried off one generation of mankind after another: the *temple* of Solomon, the city of *Jerusalem*, the *lofty* walls, the *stately* palaces, the *hanging* gardens of *Babylon*, have all been moved by the hand, and swept away by the besom of time. *Kings* and *Emperors* have burnt and destroyed *millions* of *Christians*; the LORD CHRIST himself

nity of the gospel. It hath been the manner of *impostors* in every age to write their own systems; but Jesus leaving his gospel to be written by his apostles, is a proof that he was no impostor: it shews that he neither meant to impose on his apostles, nor wished them to impose on others. It discovers his full persuasion of his doctrine as the truth; a doctrine that could stand on its own legs, without the crutch of human authority, or the dark collusions of priestcraft.

self was put to death ; *Popes* have laid an embargo upon the Bible ; they have covered it up in a dead language, and forbid it to be read by the people ; but the greatest persecutors have never been able to destroy it. Towns and libraries have been burnt by fire, or swallowed up by earthquakes ; but the scriptures have been preserved : they are *before us*. The watchful providence of God hath rescued them from the *iron* hands of persecutors ; from the *avaricious* clutches of priests : it hath stript them of every dark covering ; and, by *translating* them into every * language, it hath spread them in large and shining

* *Mr Paine* (page 16.) says, that the word of God cannot exist in any spoken or printed language, because of the "*continually progressive change to which the meaning of words is subject*." But this argument is as strong against Mr P.'s word of the creation, as it is against the written word. The earth hath undergone as great a † translation by the flood, as ever the Bible did by translation into any foreign language. The different climates, too, give more different ideas of God to their particular inhabitants, than it is possible for any different translations of the Bible to do. If the people on the torrid zone form their ideas of God from what they feel, they will conceive of him as a God all *fire* : while the inhabitants of the frigid zone will conceive of him as a God of *ice*. It hath been owing to this—to men forming ideas of God from sensible objects, and not having an inspired revelation—that the heathen *mythology* hath become so voluminous. Men have made a God of every thing from the *sun* in the firmament, to their own excrements. But, *Mr P.* begs the question when he says, that the *solar system* hath always existed in its present form. If the earth hath

† *Burnet and Whiston's Theories—Buffon's Natural History.*

shining characters before the eyes of all nations.—Now, why hath God so carefully watched over the scriptures? How is it that a book so universally abhorred by wicked men and devils, should continue so long, in the midst of their combined enmity? The fact is open; and this fact of the preservation is a part of the proof, that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*.—I might continue this induction, by adducing a variety of other arguments in proof of the divinity of the holy scriptures: As,

7th, The *moral* character, the *public* life and teaching, of Jesus.

8th, The very *rapid* progress of the gospel soon after the ascension.

9th, The great and voluntary *sufferings* of the apostles.

10th, The dreadful *corruptions* of Christianity in the rise and progress of antichrist, as a *fulfilment* of New Testament prophecy. But the truth of any proposition doth not depend so much on the *number* as on the *strength* of

hath undergone such a revolution by the flood, it is a presumption, if we reason by analogy, that, similar changes may have taken place in the other planets individually: and if such alterations have taken place, we have no certain proof to the contrary, but the whole solar system may have existed in a different form. Who, then, told Mr P. that the *works of creation* are the only word of God? The fact is, Mr P's. argument is a *sophism*; it proceeds upon a probability, which, though very great, will not justify the universal conclusion he draws from it. It may *hoodwink* a weak reader, but it is not tenable in itself.

of the arguments.—I shall conclude this first sermon, by repeating the following alarming texts : *If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city. He that believeth, shall be saved : he that believeth not, shall be damned. He that is wise, shall be wise for himself ; but he that SCORNETH, he alone shall bear it.*

SERMON

SERMON II.

MR PAINE'S OBJECTIONS REFUTED.

On 2 Tim. iii. 16.—*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*

NOVUM AUT NIHIL, (*A new thing or nothing*), is the cry of the present age. But the Age of Reason, hath not even the charm of novelty to recommend it. *Mr P.* hath not produced one objection against revealed religion, abstract from the low ridicule, and obscene buffoonry with which he hath treated the subject, but what hath been brought and refuted, hundreds of years before he was born. But though the Age of Reason contains nothing new in respect of itself, it presents us with a very great oddity in the person of *Mr P.* It is nothing uncommon, to see men of a certain description, swearing one thing in one court of justice, and denying it in another, as it may serve to promote their interest, or cover their villainy. But, to see a man of *Mr P.*'s professed philanthropy, a man of *Mr P.*'s pretensions to
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philosophical inquiry, and disinterested integrity, openly and repeatedly contradicting himself, is an *oddity* indeed. It is in this strange character that Mr P. appears in his *Age of Reason*. In 1792, Mr P. published his book, intitled *Common Sense*. In 1795, he published his *Age of Reason*; and light and darkness, the east and the west, are not more opposite, than Mr P.'s sentiments are in these different publications. In his book *Common Sense*, Mr P. appears like a man, in the morning, swearing before all men that the sun is *white*; he fully and repeatedly acknowledges the *Divinity* of the scriptures. In his *Age of Reason*, he appears like the same man, in the afternoon of the same day, swearing that the sun is *black*; he denies, in the most *indecent* manner *, the divinity of the scriptures.

In this sermon, I shall,

1st, Shew that Mr P. cannot be sincere in his objections.

2^d, I shall inquire particularly into the nature and extent of that evidence which is necessary to establish the divinity of the scriptures, and shew that it is on a gross

* Mr P. objects to the account of the *nativity*, because of what he calls its *obscenity*; but the obscenity is in Mr P.'s own mind. It is no more unworthy of God, that he formed the human nature of the Lord Christ, in the way mentioned in the gospels, than it is unworthy of God to be the Creator of the different sexes. Mr P.'s objection is worse than unphilosophic,—it betrays a little and *unborish* mind. But to the unbelieving and defiled, there is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. See what he says of Isaiah, page 46.—of the raised saints, page 73.—and his account of Mary Magdalene, page 74.

gross mistake of this evidence, which the Bible so fully contains, that all Mr P.'s *crippled* and *whiffling* objections are founded.

3d, That even supposing *Mr P.* to be sincere, the principles which he wishes to establish, are the strongest arguments for the divinity of the scriptures; for if the scriptures are false, no deist can vindicate the moral justice of God.

1st, I shall shew that *Mr P.* cannot be sincere in his objections, because he openly and repeatedly acknowledges the divinity of the scriptures in his book *Common Sense*. In that publication, *Mr P.* not only refers to the scriptures, but he quotes them, as of divine authority; he *anchors* his whole argument against monarchical governments on the truth of their divinity. In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* considers the devil as an imaginary being, as a creature of priests. But, in his book, intitled *Common Sense*, he acknowledges both his existence, and his particular influence over mankind. His words are, "Governments were first introduced into the world by heathens. It was the most prosperous invention the DEVIL ever set on foot, for the promotion of idolatry." In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* affirms (Part II. page 14.), that *Genesis*, &c. must have been written so late as the times of David; that it was not, and could not be, written by Moses. But, in his book *Common Sense*, he not only admits that *Genesis* was written by Moses, but that it was written thousands of years before Saul. "Near three thousand years passed away, from the Mosaic account of the creation till the Jews, under a national delusion, requested a king." In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.*

denies the theocracy of the Jews; and says, that Moses was an impostor, in pretending that God appeared to him. Page 96, " I totally disbelieve that ever the Almighty did communicate any thing to man, by any mode of speech, or by any appearance, otherwise than by the universal display of himself in the works of creation," &c. But, in his book *Common Sense*, he fully admits that God did manifest himself by special and miraculous interposition. " Till then, their (the Hebrews) government, except in extraordinary cases, where the Almighty interposed, was a kind of republic, administered by a judge, and the elders of the people." In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* says, that the book of Judges hath not even the pretence of being called the word of God; he represents all the victories of the Israelites as unauthorised by God, as the effects of injustice and cruelty. But, in his book *Common Sense*, he positively ascribes *Gideon's* victory over the Midianites to God himself. " The children of Israel being oppressed by the Midianites, Gideon marched against them with a very small army, and victory, through the Divine interposition, decided in their favour." But, *Mr P.* not only mentions the victory, but he blames the Jews for not considering it as a divine interposition, and as immediately effected by the power of God. " The Jews, elate with success, and attributing it to the generalship of Gideon, proposed making him a king." In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* represents all the Jewish kings and judges as bad men, in his own *Billingsgate*, as a "*parcel of rascals*." But, in his book *Common Sense*, he celebrates Gideon, as a prodigy of piety and disinterestedness; he speaks as highly of him,

as he could have done of General *Washington*, or of any member of the French Convention. "But Gideon, in the piety of his soul, replied, I will not rule over you." In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* denies, that either Samuel, or any of the prophets, were the messengers of God; he represents them as a parcel of strolling gentry, prophesying for or against the party which favoured them. But, in his book *Common Sense*, he recognises both Gideon and Samuel, as prophets of God, and their message as of divine authority. "The will of the Almighty, as declared by Gideon, and the prophet Samuel, expressly disapproves of government by kings." After speaking of the fulfilment of Samuel's prophecies, and the answers to Samuel's prayers, *Mr P.* proceeds, not so much in the style of a politician, as of a Bible advocate, pleading for the divinity of the scriptures. "These portions of scripture are express and positive; they admit of no equivocal construction." What a glaring contradiction! for, in his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* represents Samuel and all the prophets as impostors, and their prophecies as 'a nose o' wax, to be turned and bent to any side by commentators and priests. In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* considers the scriptures as a threefold fraud, as unfriendly and ruinous to the happiness of man. But, in his book *Common Sense*, he considers men in Popish countries, as being at a very great loss in being denied the use of the scriptures. His own words are, "A man hath reason to believe, that there is as much of *king-craft*, as *priest-craft*, in with-holding the scriptures from the people in Popish countries." In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* says, that man stands in the same relative connection with God

as at the beginning ; he laughs at the idea of the resurrection and future punishments. But, in his book *Common Sense*, he admits the truth of the fall ; the propriety of preaching ; the necessity of repentance, and the eternity of hell-torments. His words to the Quakers are, " If ye had the honest soul of Barclay, you would preach repentance to your king ; ye would tell him of his sins, and warn him of eternal ruin ; ye would, as faithful ministers, cry aloud, and spare not." In his *Age of Reason*, *Mr P.* says, (Part II. page 39.) " That we have learned from the Jewish accounts to call the Gentiles heathens, but that they were a just and moral people, and not addicted, like the Jews, to cruelty and revenge." But, in his book *Common Sense*, (page 8.), *Mr P.* considers the Gentiles as a wicked people, and the Jews as good men. " And here we cannot but observe, that their (the Jews) motives were bad, that they might be like the other nations of the earth, *i. e.* the heathens ; whereas their true glory lay in being as much unlike them as possible." In his *Age of Reason*, (page 65. part II.), *Mr P.* represents the story of Jesus Christ as fabulous ; but, in his book *Common Sense*, he recognises Christ, as the Saviour of men, as a prophet, and says, that his prophecies were fulfilled. His words are, " Kings are not taken away by miracles, even the dispersion of the Jews, though foretold by our Saviour, was effected by arms." Now, what conclusion shall we draw from these gross and repeated contradictions ? What apology can *Mr P.* make for them ? He cannot say that his mind is changed since he wrote his book *Common Sense* ; for in his preface to the Second Part of his *Age of Reason*,

Reason, he says, " I have mentioned in the former Part of the Age of Reason, that it had long been my intention to publish my thoughts on religion ; but I had originally reserved it to a later period in life, intending it to be the last work I should undertake." From these words it is plain, that *Mr P.* always considered the scriptures as fabulous. On what principle, then, could *Mr P.* take it upon him to recognise the divinity of the scriptures in his book *Common Sense*, and ascribe any part of them to God Almighty ? And now, ye Deists, in Stockport, Manchester, and London, in Great Britain, in France, and in America, what have ye got to say for *Mr P.*'s gross contradictions ? Will you still believe the Age of Reason, and that the scriptures are fabulous ? Why, you believe what *Mr P.* doth not believe himself. It is not my business to believe the reports which have been circulated respecting *Mr P.* " That he was bred a staymaker, rose to a place in the excise, that he was expelled for some misdemeanor, that in consequence he fled to America, and that it was to revenge himself on the King and government of Great Britain, that he hath taken such an active part in the American and French revolutions. The great question, Are the scriptures the word of God ? is a question that cannot be anchored on the moral CHARACTERS of men. It could not affect the question ; it could be no argument against the Age of Reason, though it had been written by the devil himself. It could not recommend this and other answers to the Age of Reason, though they were written by the angel Gabriel. The divinity of the scriptures is like that Mount Sinai, from whence they were delivered. It may

be covered with a cloud. It may be wrapped in smoke, but it cannot be removed. But *Mr Paine's* contradictions shew, that he is a very unfit person to advocate either side of the question. When a man's moral sentiments become so *ragged* as to permit him to go into such contradictions, and that too on a question in which the eternal happiness or misery of his fellow-creatures is concerned, it shews, that he is capable of any thing; he is prepared, and that willingly, to beg the question; knowingly to mistake the question; to sacrifice truth to speciosity, and to offer up the dearest interests of mankind at the shrine of ridicule and buffoonry. This is what *Mr P.* hath done. The whole of his Age of Reason is no better than "the baseless fabric of a vision." It totters on a mistake of the question. It proceeds on the supposition, that if *Mr P.* disproves the personal testimony of Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the other Bible writers, he disproves the divinity of the scriptures; but *Mr P.* as I shall shew in this sermon, hath never brought into view, he hath never attempted to disprove, that public and universal evidence, by which alone, and independent of all the personal testimony of the Bible authors, the divinity of the scriptures is established. In his Age of Reason, *Mr P.* tells all the world that he is not a believer. In his book Common Sense, he loudly proclaims that he is no deist, for no honest deist will be so blasphemous and profane, as to ascribe lies and falsehoods to God Almighty. *Mr P.* hath left mankind to conclude, or rather he hath drawn the inference upon himself, that he must be an atheist. If *Mr P.* had gone into any court of justice, and given his evidence in the same contradictory

tory manner that he hath given it for and against the divinity of the scriptures, he would have been in danger of having his ears cropt for perjury, and would have justly deserved it; and yet this is the man who hath taken it upon him to laugh at the faith of all Christians, to insult the reason of the deists themselves, by a mistake of the question, and by putting their cause on a partial view of the case. But Mr P. is not only at odds with himself, but he is often at odds with the most stubborn facts; he retails the most shameful falsehoods. In page 36. he says, that the book of Job carries no internal evidence of being an Hebrew book; that the Jews had no translation of the Astronomical names, *Pleiades*, *Orion*, and *Arcturus*.— But Mr P. only discovers his gross ignorance in this assertion, for the Hebrews had names for these constellations in their own language. In the Hebrew Bible, the word for *Arcturus* is HUS. The word for *Orion* is BESIL, and the word for *Pleiades* is BIMA. I put the words in Roman instead of Hebrew characters, for the sake of the English reader. The very formation of the sentences, too, in what Bishop Lowth calls *parallelisms*, is peculiar to the manner of the Hebrews, and a strong proof that the book of Job is an Hebrew, and not a Gentile composition. In page 47. Mr P. denies that Isaiah's prophecy to Ahaz was fulfilled. But, in the 15th chapter of 2d Kings, compared with the 28th chapter of 2d Chronicles, and the 7th chapter of Isaiah, we find, that Isaiah's prophecy respecting the destruction of the two kings, was *literally* fulfilled, and also *within the time* set by the prophet. It is Mr P. that is the liar and impostor, and not the prophet Isaiah. But,

2d, I shall inquire particularly into the nature and extent of that evidence, which is necessary to establish the divinity of the scriptures; and shew, that it is on a gross mistake of this evidence, that all Mr P.'s *crippled* and *whiffling* objections are founded. Now, this is the more necessary, *first*, because the Bible plentifully affords such evidence; and, *secondly*, because it is upon a mistake as to the nature, and on ignorance as to the extent, of such evidence, that the whole of the Age of Reason proceeds. Mr P. undertakes to say, and indeed he puts the whole stress upon it (pages 3. and 4.), that our belief of the Bible, as being the word of God, depends altogether, *first*, upon the certainty that the books were written by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; and, *secondly*, on the credit we give to their testimony. It is in this *peeping* view that the whole of Mr P.'s sophistry lies. He confines his eye to the authenticity of particular authorship, instead of extending it to the *public* and *continued* evidence. He confounds individual testimony with, and mistakes it for, those public and miraculous facts, by which that individual testimony is authenticated; he positively begs the question; he asserts, that if he "can prove that the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, were not written by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, then the authority and authenticity of those books is gone at once." By putting the question on this narrow foot, Mr P. throws away the weapon by which he promised (page 6.) to combat the advocates of the Bible. Though he touches the handle of the sword, he doth not handle the sword itself. In taking up with individual testimony, he shews himself to be a far greater enthusiast than any Bible believer. Mr P. rejects revelation, because he says that the
books

books were not written by Moses, Samuel, and Joshua, *i. e.* if Mr P. could believe the testimony of the authors, or that the books ascribed to them were written by them, then he would believe the Bible to be the word of God. But believers rest their faith on evidence, altogether independent of the personal testimony of the particular authors. What then is the nature, and what is the extent, of that evidence which is necessary to establish the divinity of the scriptures? *Reason*, and the very nature of the thing, require,

1st, That the evidence be *public*. It must not lie in the peeping, or muttering testimony of any interested, or revengeful individual, whether he be *Moses* or *Tom Paine*.

2^d, It must be *plain*. As it is addressed to all men, who may die the next moment, it must not require a long time, and deep investigation to understand it. It must be level to the capacity of the subject digging in a ditch, as well as of the philosopher in his closet, or the king sitting on his throne.

3^d, It must be *consistent*. It must not contradict itself in any thing essential to a revelation.

4th, The evidence must be *continued*, both in nature and extent, the same to the last, as to the first generations of men. It is upon such evidence that the Bible *plentifully* affords it, the believers receive it as the word of God; if the matters which compose the Bible had been secret and personal transactions; if Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, had only told us of things seen by them, and spoken to them, then, and in this case, our belief must have depended on the testimony of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, and, secondly, on the credit which we give
to

to their testimony. But the Bible writers refer to evidence external of themselves, to great and public transactions; to things done in the sight of thousands, and in which it was impossible for the witnesses to be deceived. This shews us that the testimony of *Moses*, &c. is not essential to the divinity of the scriptures. Though Mr P. could disprove the authenticity of the authorship, and he hath not done it, the question would remain untouched, unless he could also disprove the authenticity of the facts. The things related by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, would be the same. They would have the same authority had they been written by any other persons, had the books been anonymous, had the author never been known, yea, though they had never been written at all.* To set this matter

* The patriarchs had no written revelation. Jesus Christ did not command his apostles immediately to write, but to preach the gospel. This shews that it is *not essential* to the facts which compose the Old and New Testaments, or to our faith in them, that *they must be written*. I make this observation, to shew the reader, how childish it is in Mr P. to make such a *splutter* about *dates*. If Mr P. will deny the facts of scripture, because of Anachronisms, he may also deny the existence of the sun and planets, because all the philosophers differ about their apparent and real diameters. When Venus last made her transit over the sun, she appeared through some glasses as large as a shilling; through others about the bulk of a horse-bean, and through others no larger than a common pea. Some writers may say, that she made her transit at one hour, and some at another: but these different appearances and times, could be no argument against the transit itself. In like manner, the great question about the facts of the Bible is not so much, Did they fall out at such a time? or were they recorded by such a man? but, Did they happen? Did the facts actually take place?

matter in a strong light, to shew the material difference between the authenticity of particular authorship on which Mr P. puts the issue of the question, and the authenticity of the great and public facts, by which the divinity of the scriptures is established, I will put two cases, and then shew how they apply to the present question. *First*, Suppose three men, Moses, Samuel, and Joshua, to give their testimony, to swear to any secret transaction, viz. that they saw Ezekiel blow out Jeremiah's brains, and rob him of his money on Kennington Common, then, and in this case, the faith of the judge and jury must rest solely on the testimony of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; and, *secondly*, on the credit which they give to their testimony: And they must do so; for as the transaction from the circumstance of place was private, no other evidence for or against it could be found. But suppose, *secondly*, that Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, were to make affidavit, that they saw on a certain day, and at a certain hour, the King of Great Britain ride from his own palace to the parliament-house; or, that they saw the three criminals, *Colley, Cole, and Blanche*, led out, and hung at Execution Dock, for the murder of Captain *Little*; or that they saw the sun in an eclipse, on this 25th day of March 1796, at eleven o'clock in the morning, then, and in this case, the individual testimony of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, would not be an essential in our belief of these transactions; for as the transactions themselves must be public, the truth or falsehood of their existence, could be authenticated by thousands besides them. The oath of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, could not command belief, if these transactions were false. Their oath against them could not disprove them,

them, if they were true. These cases are expressly in point; and let us see how they apply to that evidence on which the divinity of the scriptures rests. Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Elijah, and Jesus Christ, never called men to believe their individual testimony, but in so far as they could authenticate that testimony by interpositions made openly by God himself, and in the sight of all the people. When Moses went to speak to the people, and to Pharaoh, in Egypt, he did not tell them that the angel of the Lord had appeared to him in the burning bush at the back of mount Horeb. Moses knew that as this was a secret transaction, he would not be believed on his own individual testimony. It would have been unworthy of God to demand it, enthusiastic in Moses to expect it, and irrational in the people to give it. If Moses could have produced nothing more, he would have had no more claim to public credit, than the present *Richard Brothers*, in his letters to the King, or the famous *G. Turner*, in his divine communications.—Instead of hearing him as a messenger from God, Pharaoh would either have shut him up as a dangerous Jacobin, or kept him at large as a merry Andrew, for the amusement of his court. Moses was so far from resting the truth of his divine legation to the people, on the appearance at the burning bush, that he was not satisfied with it himself. He sought a sign, and the Lord gave him two; one by changing and rechanging his rod into a serpent; another by smiting his hand with the leprosy, and restoring it. By these miraculous credentials, Moses opened his commission; he not only repeated the sign of the changing rod, but he wrought the ten different, and ever memorable plagues, in the sight of all

all the people*. The whole people were witnesses of all the miracles preceding the deliverance, and of the final and dreadful miracle that achieved it. The whole people, 600,000, were witnesses to the miracle in passing the Red Sea, and sung an hymn composed by Moses for the use of their children in all generations. The whole people saw the dreadful promulgation of the law from Sinai. The whole people were witnesses of all the miracles wrought in the wilderness for the space of forty years. They all eat of the manna, and drank of the water that flowed from the smitten rock. They all marched and rested under the standard of the pillar of cloud and fire. But Moses not only rested his commission on these public and alarming facts, but when his authority was questioned, as we see in the 16th of Numbers, he vindicated his claims by a public appeal to God, and by immediate answers from heaven. By that time an idea appears to have prevailed, that Moses had no more claim to the character of a public and particular legislator than any of the rest; and as all the people had been equally partakers with Moses in the miraculous support, and witnesses of the divine interpositions, one would think, that the idea was not only very natural, but might have been excused. But how doth God support the claims of Moses? Why, by new and destructive miracles on those who denied them. Moses had no sooner made an end of speaking, than the earth clave asunder, and swallowed up the company of Corah. On the day following, 14,700 were killed, because they murmured against Moses; and it was not till, by the authority

* Lord President Forbes.

thority of Moses, that an atonement was made, and the plague was stayed. But Moses not only vindicated his legation by evidence, altogether independent of his own personal testimony while he lived, but when about to die, he appeals to the people themselves for the truth of the divine appearances; he alledges the truth of all the miracles which God had wrought upon them, and before them, as reasons why they should keep the law. The people, on the other hand, clench Moses, See Deut. xxix.

3. The strong and continued attachment of the modern Jews cannot be accounted for on any other principle, than that their system was originally from God. The Jews are neither Christians nor deists. Moses foretold their dispersion; the loss of their genealogy. He holds them up as a spectacle to all men, and curses their rebellion as the cause of it, and yet they hold by him. Now, this plain, miraculous, and public evidence, was not only given to the Jews in the times of Moses, but it is continued; it is equally miraculous and public to us. The fulfilment of the prophecies, is as certain evidence to us of the truth of the miracles, as the miracles were to the Jews, for the time being, of the divinity of the prophecies. What sophistry is it then, in Mr P. to say, (page 14.), that if we take away from Genesis the idea that Moses was the author, there remains nothing but a book of downright lies. That the story of Eve and the serpent, of Noah and his ark, drops to a level with the Arabian Night Tales, without the merit of being entertaining. But when Mr P. was pulling down the Bible, he ought to have put it a little lower. The Night Tales are no lower than the surface of the earth. But if Mr
P.

P. or his disciples, will dig in almost any part of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, they will find a very entertaining account of Noah and his ark. They will find the leaves, branches, and trunks of trees; sea-shells in the middle of stones; they will find the horns * of stags, and of other animals, as far below the surface of the earth, as the writings of Moses say the waters were above it. This is an universal and standing proof that the whole surface of the earth hath once been in a state of fluidity. The diversity of human language cannot be accounted for at the first on any other principle than the confusion at Babel. The particular histories, too, in the books of Moses, are referred to by the most ancient histories, long before the time in which Mr P. supposes the Bible to have been made. The most ancient historians among the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Indians, and Greeks, mention the earth's being formed out of a chaos. The names of Adam and Eve are mentioned by *Sanboniatban*. The longevity of the antediluvians, by *Berosus* and *Manethos*. Noah's ark is mentioned by *Berosus*. The family of Noah, and two of every kind, entering into the ark. And this is the exact account given by Moses. The dove that Noah sent out of the ark, by *Abydenus* and *Plutarch*; the building of Babel, by *Abydenus*; the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, by *Diodorus Siculus*, *Strabo*, and *Tacitus*; some particulars of the history of Abraham, and of the other patriarchs, are mentioned by *Berosus*; the singular piety of the most ancient Jews, by *Strabo* and *Justin*. Some of David's achievements are

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* See Dr Clarke's Sermons on the Attributes.

found in the *Egyptian* annals; some of the actions of Elijah are mentioned by *Menander*, and acknowledged by *Julian* himself; and *Julian* was not only as bitter an enemy to revelation, but a much more consistent deist, than *Mr P.* The history of *Jonah* and the whale, which *Mr P.* considers only as a satire, is mentioned as true by *Lycophéron*, and by *Eneas Gaxeus*, under the name of *Herculus*. These instances are strong proofs of the authenticity of the scriptures. They assign a very proper reason for what *Mr P.* says, (page 4.) "Were I to refer for proofs to any of the ancient authors whom the advocates of the Bible call profane, they would controvert that authority, as I controvert theirs." But *Mr P.* knew that the profane authors would be all against them. So we find, that though he doth not refer to profane authors, in his attempting to disprove the books of *Moses*, he is glad to grasp at a shadow when he can see it: he quotes *Boulanger's* Life of *St Paul*, against the New Testament. But the deists will cry out, all this amounts to no more, than that such books as those ascribed to *Moses*, existed early, but there is no proof that these books are inspired; but in the history of the Bible, we find the most awful sanctions practically attending the transgression of its peculiar precepts. As man is more capable of moral excellence than any of the lower animals, he must be more dear to the Almighty, and yet a greater degree of infirmity is attached to the most beautiful part of the race, in the reproduction of the species, than is felt by the inferior tribes. This is a standing proof of the first sin, and of one part of the curse. The baleful effects of the sin of *Onan* are such as no priest could

could either invent or inflict as a sanction to any system; and is a practical proof, that the precepts commanding individual purity must have been inspired*. The *Morbus Venereus* is not to be found among the lower animals. It is to be found among † Pagans, who never heard of the written word of God; and it is a practical proof, that the precepts which regulate the commerce of the sexes must have been inspired. Our Lord's command, *Love your enemies*, is so far above human power, without the influence of the spirit of God, as to shew it could not be of human invention. The frequent, if not universal discovery, of secret murder, is a daily proof of the divinity of that denunciation, *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by ‡ man shall his blood be shed*. Now, how is it that we thus see Mr P.'s "*Word of the Creation*," pointing to the written word, and by such continued and tremendous sanctions, as are altogether above the power of man either to command or prevent. This is a practical proof of what is said in the text, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. Mr P. admits that Jesus Christ was a worthy reformer, a good moral character. Now, Christ quoted the writings of Moses as of divine authority. Sometimes he mentions Moses by name; and this fully shews, that Moses was considered by the whole

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Jewish

* Dr Tissot.

† Dr Robertson's History of America.

‡ It struck the author's mind very much, that in the very moment he was writing the above text, his daily newspaper from London came in, and mentions five different murderers, all hung up together at Winchester.

Jewish nation, as the author of the books ascribed to him. Sometimes, again, he quotes the writings, without mentioning Moses; and this fully shews, that Moses being the author was not an essential to the books being of divine revelation.

The New Testament anchors its divinity on evidence equally plain, consistent, public, and continued, as that of the Old. When Jesus Christ challenged the attention and faith of men, he did not rest his being the Son of God, or the divinity of his doctrine, as Mr P. ignorantly says, on the "testimony of Joseph and Mary," he at all times charged his followers to beware of implicit faith; *if I bear witness of myself, my witness, i. e. my personal testimony, independent of my works, is not true*, but the works which I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. When John Baptist pointed out Jesus as the Messiah, it was not on the testimony of Joseph and Mary, but on the public testimony of God himself, by a voice from the excellent glory on the banks of Jordan. The devils confessed Christ's divinity, because they felt his power, *We know thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most High God, art thou come to torment us before the time?* When the apostles preached Jesus as the Son of God, and his doctrine as divine, they did not do it on the personal testimony of Jesus himself, much less on the testimony of Joseph and Mary, pretending that an angel told them so, but they rested all on the great and crowning miracle of the resurrection. Christ had put his whole character and doctrine on this, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. This he spoke of the temple of his body*. Accordingly, when the

apostles

apostles wrought miracles in the name of Christ, as proof of their commission from him, they always referred to the great fact of our Lord's resurrection, as proof both of his deity, and of the divinity of his doctrine. The resurrection is the grand chorus in all the apostolic sermons. When John received the revelation in Patmos, it was not even the testimony of Jesus speaking really or visionally from heaven, but Jesus appeared to John in the very same God-like characters in which he had acted while on earth. *I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for ever more, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death*; and when John was commanded to write the epistles to the seven churches of Asia, every epistle was to be prefaced with such a character of the Lord Christ, as Jesus himself had realised in his own person among men, and before his ascension. And this public evidence, independent of all the personal testimony of the New Testament writers, is continued down to us. If the Jews, and our Lord's immediate apostles, were witnesses of his miracles, we are witnesses of the fulfilment of his prophecies. The fulfilment of the New Testament prophecies, in the rise and progress of deism, is as true, and more extensive, though not so striking, evidence to us of the divinity of the New Testament, as if we had been eye-witnesses of our Lord's healing the blind man, or of his resurrection from the dead. Mr P. makes a very great *potter* about the different, and what he calls the contradictory genealogies given by St Matthew, and St Luke; but, not to say that a perfectly correct genealogy is not necessary to our faith, Mr P. only discovers his gross ignorance, in calling them con-

tradiſtory. *Matthew* gives the genealogy of *Joſeph*, but it is only for about 2000 years from *Abraham* to *Chriſt*. *Luke* gives us the genealogy of *Mary*, for near 4000 years, namely, from *Adam* to *Chriſt*. This view of the genealogy ſufficiently accounts for *Matthew's* being only 28 generations, and *Luke* 43. *Matthew's* genealogy is not only of a different perſon, but of a different and ſhorter period, than that of *Luke*. From this review it fully appears, that the ſcriptures contain all that evidence which is neceſſary to eſtabliſh their divinity. We believe the ſcriptures to be the word of God, not on the perſonal teſtimony of the writers, but upon the great and public evidence of thouſands, who were eye and ear witneſſes of the facts which they record. We believe not upon that evidence as it was temporary in the public miracles, wrought in the times of *Moſes*, *Elijah*, and of *Chriſt*; but in that evidence as continued through all generations, and now before our own eyes, in the fulfilment of Old and New Teſtament prophecy; and it is by leaving the Bible, by taking up with perſonal teſtimony, by profanely reducing God Almighty to the character of a *quack*, and *conjurer*, and all mankind to the character of *dupes* and *mumpers*, that all Mr P.'s *crippled* and *whiffling* objections are founded. I ſhall conclude this head, by adding a table of *fourteen* eminent writers, who wrote upon the *books* of the New Teſtament, and all in the fourth century; and ſo many writers, all ſo early as the fourth century, is ſtrong proof that the New Teſtament, long before their time, had been held as of divine authority.

Eusebius

Eusebius,	A. D. 315	Gregory Nysen,	371
Juvenius, Spain,	330	Dydimus of Alex.	370
Theodore, Thrace,	334	Ambrose of Milan,	374
Fortunatus,	340	Diodore of Tarsus,	378
Hilary, Poitiers,	354	Guadent. of Brescia,	387
Appollinarius of Lao-		Theodore of Cilicia,	394
dicea,	362	Jerome,	392
Damasus, Rome,	366		

But, 3dly, I will suppose that Mr P. is sincere in his objections—I will suppose, for the sake of argument, though not grant, that the *scriptures are fabulous*, that the Bible, consisting of *prophecy, miracle, and mystery*, is a *fraud of priests*, a gross imposition on mankind. But the principles by which Mr P. tries to establish this, are the strongest arguments that the scriptures are true; for if they are false, no deist can vindicate the moral justice of God. To set this argument in a clear light, I will ask the reader one question, What are the principles which Mr P. wishes to establish in his Age of Reason? They may be all summed up in the following particulars:

1st, That man stands in the same relative and moral connection with God, as at the beginning.

2d, That the works of God in creation, is the only word of God, and sufficient to direct our conduct, and secure our happiness.

3d, That the Bible, consisting of prophecy, miracle, and mystery, is a fraud of priests, and a gross imposition on mankind. And,

4th, That it is the duty of every true deist, to vindicate

state the moral justice of God against the calumnies of the Bible.

Now, let us look how these principles will agree, and we shall see that the *third*, like Moses's serpent in Egypt, will swallow up all the rest, if man stands in the same moral connection with God as at the first; and this is what Mr P. roundly affirms of all men universally, priests as well as others, if man hath not sinned, if he is not the subject of any moral depravity, it would be altogether unnatural for him to be guilty of any fraud whatever. Mr P.'s supposition, then, that the Bible is a fraud, destroys his first and great principle, that man stands in the same moral and relative connection with God as at the first. That the Bible is a fraud, is, of all others, the most unworthy idea we can entertain of God's moral justice, as the governor of the world. It is no reply to this, that we Bible believers consider the delusions of Mahomet and Antichrist as frauds, and that these frauds have existed under the moral government of God; for supposing the Bible to be a fraud, it is a fraud altogether *sui generis*, and entirely different from the delusions of Mahomet and Antichrist. These last are but of late date. They contain no prophecies that they shall continue. As the Bible forewarns men of their causes, rise, and progress, so it markedly foretels their destruction; but the Bible hath existed in substance, though not in form, for near 6000 years. It hath not only existed from the beginning, but it contains *bold, clear, and repeated* prophecies, that it shall continue and spread universally, till the end of time. It threatens the destruction and final extirpation of all other systems. It prophecies that "*all the*
ends

ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea, and that the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ It threatens eternal destruction to all who will not receive, believe, and obey it. Now, what can be more unworthy of God, than to permit a fraud of this kind to exist. It is consistent with the moral justice of God to permit temporary frauds, as the punishment of sin, on the supposition that man is fallen. Such frauds we see every day ; but when we consider the Bible as such a fraud, as it must be on Mr P.'s supposition, and it pretends to all, and more than I have stated, nothing could be more unworthy of God than to permit it. The supposition amounts to an undeifying of the Almighty. It represents God, and for no cause, as putting the Bible into the hands of a few men called priests, to the destruction of all others in every generation. When we consider the great extent of Bible prophecy and threatening as reaching to eternity, Mr P.'s supposition makes God inferior to man ; it represents God as eternally bound by his moral justice to check the fraud, but never able to do it. But Mr P.'s supposition is not only inconsistent with God's moral justice in the abstract, but it is repugnant to all the practical displays of it in common providence. Frauds in every age have been generally discovered, and often punished. The purity of the divine government shewed itself in the destruction of the old world by the flood ; in Sodom and Gomorrah, by fire and brimstone from heaven ; and if Mr P. will controvert these histories because they are contained in the Bible,

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he cannot deny striking instances in our own times.—
 How often hath Mr P. seen the most atrocious wicked-
 ness disclosed, and that by means altogether unexpected.
 How often hath the spy been brought to that gib-
 bet which, like Haman, he had set up for another.—
 How often do we see murderers, when they cannot be
 traced by open and regular evidence, come forward and
 confess themselves? Now, if Mr P. reckons it worthy
 of the moral justice of God to discover or punish what
 may be a cause of oppression or destruction to an indivi-
 dual, he must reckon it unworthy to let that continue
 which is universally hurtful. Mr P.'s supposition, that
 the Bible is a fraud, is dishonourable to the reason of
 man in all former generations, and irreconcilable to
 the history of the progress of the human mind. In the
 history of the human mind, the greatest mistakes have
 been discovered and corrected. When the ancients saw
 the mercury rise in the barometer tube, or water in a
 common pump, they gave as a reason for it, that "nature
 abhorred a vacuum." But experimental philosophy hath
 discovered, that it is owing to the pressure of the atmo-
 sphere. Men no longer believe the earth to be flat like
 a trencher, and the stars like so many nails in a horse
 shoe. Now, if such mistakes have been corrected, how
 is it that the fraud of the Bible hath escaped, if there
 were any. It would be paying too great a compliment
 to Mr P. to say, that as other philosophers have corrected
 mistakes in the natural, he is now clearing out the rub-
 bish of the moral world. Mr P. hath said nothing new.
 Believers in the Bible have seen all Mr P.'s objections
 before he published his Age of Reason; some of these
 they consider as quite immaterial. Others are of greater
 moment;

moment ; but at the same time, when they see these, they see greater on the side of deism. The belief of the Bible doth not, like the principles of deism, cast any scandal on the divine government. Could not the same strength of understanding, by which Sir Isaac Newton could pass from the dropping of an apple from the tree, to the discovery of the great law of gravitation, also have seen into the priestcraft of the scriptures? Mr P.'s Age of Reason practically says, that all men have been round-heads and idiots since the world began. That the Bible is a fraud of priests, is inconsistent with the great law of self-preservation. One dog will not stand, if he can fly in the street, till another tear him in pieces ; but thousands of priests themselves have died as martyrs for the divinity of the scriptures ; but, according to Mr P. they have all died as madmen and as fools. This shews us the very philosophic and extensive nature of deistical charity. It denies the universality of the law of self-preservation. It tramples on the blood of the martyrs, and swears that God is a liar. Mr P.'s supposition that the Bible is a fraud, is inconsistent with his own account of the abilities and learning of priests. In page 87. he says, that the sum-total of a parson's learning, is *hic, hac, hoc, &c.* Now, how is it that if the gospel be an invention of such insignificant men, it hath been able to put an end to Jewish monarchy, and heathen idolatry.—How was it, in the first ages, that a number of illiterate fishermen put to flight both the Jewish priests, and the Gentile philosophers? Mr P. without telling him, affords the reader one of the strongest arguments for the divinity of the scriptures. Frauds, like cannon-bullets, are dark and heavy things ; they require the authority
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of kings, and the manœuvres of priests, to carry them along; but the gospel, like the meridian sun, sheds its light and heat among all nations, without any artificial aid. Speaking therefore for myself, if I had no other reason to believe the Bible to be true, than the sacrifice I must make to believe it to be fabulous, that alone would be sufficient to determine my choice. But still the deists will cry out, "*And Moses and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp, and Moses was wroth with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds; and Moses said, Have ye saved all the women alive? Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord, in the matter of Peor; and there was a plague among the people. Now, kill ye every male among the little ones, and kill ye every woman that hath known man by lying by him: but all the women children that have not known a man by lying by him, ye shall save alive for yourselves.*" This passage naturally suggests the two following questions: 1st, Why were the women who had known man by lying by him, and the males among the little ones, killed? 2^d, Why were the women children who had not known man by lying by him saved? Why were the women who had known man by lying by him killed? The text answers this question, and the answer is worthy of the moral justice of God. *Behold, these caused the children of Israel to commit trespass against the Lord, in the matter of Peor.* The intention, then, of cutting off such women, was partly to punish idolatry, and to prevent it for the future. Baal-peor was worshipped

shipped by the sacrifice of chastity, by such rites as
 were used in the worship of Bacchus, Osiris, and Venus;
 rites the same as the *Phalli* and *Milli*, and which mo-
 destly forbids us to name. This is plain from the name
 of the idol, though we had no other evidence. Baal-
 peor signifies, in the Hebrew, the god of opening, or
 shame; and the very name of the god was expressive of
 the manner in which he was worshipped. Now, as all
 these women had been guilty, they were cut off, that they
 might not be snares to the Israelites in future. Why,
 again, were all the males among the little ones slain? Be-
 cause they were all devoted to the service of Baal-peor.
 Besides the sacrifices of chastity, Peor was worshipped by
 human sacrifices. All the males were devoted, the first
 born to be priests, and the younger sons to be sacrifices,
 if their family should need them. Now, by putting
 them all to death, Moses cut off all occasion of idolatry;
 he deprived the Israelites both of priests and sacrifices.
 Why, thirdly, were all the women children, who had
 not known man by lying with him, preserved? Not, as
 Mr P. ignorantly and obscenely says (page 15.), for the
 purpose of debauchery, but because they were innocent.
 As they were not come to age, they could not worship
 Peor by the sacrifice of chastity. They had not like the
 males, been dedicated to Baal-peor. In this way it

* That the first born and younger sons were all dedicated, is
 evident from ancient history, and it was this circumstance, as is
 justly observed by Lord President Forbes, which made the plague
 of cutting off the first born in Egypt so dreadful, and more tre-
 mendous than any of the rest. By cutting off all the first born

was both becoming the moral justice of God, and the great end of the theocracy, to preserve them. Behold then, ye deists, in this dispensation, the purity of the divine government ! Behold both the severity and goodness of God towards them that fell ; severity, in punishing them for idolatry ; towards you and me goodness, in warning us of our danger. But the supposition that Moses put so many people to death *wantonly*, is altogether inconsistent with Mr P.'s declaration, that Moses was an impostor. For what is the character of an impostor ? In every age, impostors have been publicly virtuous, and privately vicious ; but, according to Mr P. Moses must have been privately virtuous, and publicly vicious. It is the character of an impostor to follow his own principles as much as possible, but to save all appearances with the people. But Moses murdering so many persons would have been expressly contrary to his own law, *Thou shalt not kill*. His preserving the female children, for the low ends alledged by Mr P. would have been in the very *teeth* of his own law, *Thou shalt not covet*, and *Thou shalt not commit adultery*. If any deist say that these laws were only for the Jews among themselves, I deny it ; for the

of man, God killed all their priests ; by cutting off all the first born of cattle, he destroyed all their sacrifices : so that the Egyptians were not only in great distress, but they were without all remedy. They had neither priest nor sacrifice ; and they could not lawfully approach unto their gods. This too was the end of God in the destruction, Numbers xxxi. By cutting off all the males, and all the grown women, he destroyed both the priests and sacrifices of Baal-peor. The Israelites had neither priest nor sacrifice, and so they could not worship him.

the law of Moses made provision for strangers, *Thou shalt not vex a stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.* When the Jews saw an ass falling under its burden, they were to keep it up. When they found a bird's nest in the field, they were not to take the dam from the young. Now, it would stagger the moral sentiments of the worst men, to see a man pretending delicacy and squeamishness about herrying a bird's nest, and making no stand at putting so many of his fellow-creatures to death. I know that the enemies of revelation will answer all this by the old proverb, *That a bare bone will quiet a hungry dog;* that the people were silent upon this occasion, because they partook of the spoil. But, in the 25th chapter of Numbers, we see 24,000 of the Israelites themselves cut off, because they had been guilty in the instance of Zimri and Cosbi. Moses had no spoil to buy the consciences of the survivors on this occasion, and yet they make no complaint. On these principles, it is evident, that the destruction of the grown women, and male little ones, Numb. xxxii. was not a wanton and mercenary assassination, but a necessary punishment of open idolatry. But though I were to grant that instance to be assassination, and done under the government of God, it would be no greater argument against revealed religion than similar calamities, where there is no Bible, are against Mr P.'s word of the creation. The heathen, in cold blood, offered their children in sacrifice to Baal-peor. In Mr P.'s own enlightened times, the king of *Dahomy* cuts off annually a great number of his people's heads, in honour of his ancestors. In one of the eruptions of *Vesuvius*, 90,000 persons were destroyed.

destroyed. Thousands of children perished in the earthquake by which Lisbon was sunk, 1756. Thousands of infants die daily of all kinds of diseases. Now, it is all one, whether children are cut off by the sword, or in any other way. Mr P. then eventually argues against his own word of the creation, when he quotes the 31st of Numbers against revealed religion. Mr P.'s principles destroy one another. His supposition that the Bible is a fraud, is literally inconsistent with every idea of God's moral justice.—I shall conclude this sermon by observing, that the divinity of the scriptures remains untouched, until Mr P. disproves the truth of our Lord's resurrection. This is the great event to which all the Old Testament prophets look forward; it is the great point on which Christ himself rests his whole character and doctrine. It is the great event to which all the apostles look back. It may be compared to the *key-stone* in an arch, it supports the whole fabric. Though Mr P. quibbles about it, by some seeming contradictions in the *personal* testimony of the *individual* Evangelists, he hath not, because he could not, attack the *public* and impregnable evidence by which the resurrection is authenticated by the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost *, and by the fulfilment of Christ's prophecies †, in the destruction of Jerusalem.

* See Acts, second chapter.

† Josephus and Rollin.

SERMON III.

THE CAUSES OF DEISM.

On 2 Tim. iii. 16.—*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*

HISTORY tells us, that when *Sir Isaac Newton* was once in conversation with *Doctor Halley*, a professed deist, the doctor began to throw out some indecent reflections against Christianity, and *Sir Isaac* stopt him short in the following words: "Doctor Halley, I am always happy to hear you when you speak upon astronomy, or other parts of the mathematics, because that is a subject which you have studied, and well understand; but you should never talk of Christianity, for that is a subject you have not studied, and I am certain you know nothing of the matter*." I am not so weak as to apply this observation to all the deists; many of them are men, not only of great natural genius, but they have studied re-

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* Simpson's Sacred Literature.

vealed religion: but I am sure the observation will apply in all its force to *Mr Thomas Paine*, the author of *The Age of Reason*: he sneers at the Bible revelation from no other cause but his gross ignorance of that godlike evidence by which the divinity of the scriptures is supported. But, after all the *flings* from *pert* ignorance on the one hand, or learned *sophistry* on the other, the evidence of the gospel stands where it was: it is like a rock in the midst of the sea; the devouring billows roar around it, they dash over it; but, after all their united efforts, the rock keeps its own place, while the billows retire broken, and murmuring at their disappointment. It is an unchangeable reality what the apostle asserts in the words of my text, that, *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*.—I now proceed to the

II. part of the *Plan*, namely, to assign the CAUSES OF DEISM; and out of a great variety, I shall only mention the following.

1st, The *bad lives* of many who profess Christianity. When our Lord is foretelling the fate of his gospel, he says, that *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*. He compares his visible church to a field bringing forth *wheat* and *tares*; he represents his professing followers under the idea of a *mixed flock* of *sheep* and *goats*: and it is a melancholy reflection, that thousands who profess revealed religion in *words*, deny it in *practice*. This was the case in our Lord's times; and hence we hear him saying to the twelve, *Will ye also go away?* Such persons lived in the time of Paul; hence he makes that bitter complaint with a sorrowful heart, and his eyes full of tears, when writing to the *Philippians*,

pious, Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. Now, when *weak* minds see men practically contradicting the truth, they very *unphilosophically* deny the truth itself. But, the *bad* lives of some professing Christians is no argument against the truth. When we see a man professing Christianity the subject of any mean passion; when we see him stumbling and falling into the foulest crimes; when we see him a *chapel saint*, and an *house devil*; we can draw nothing from it against the truth: all the inference which reason allows us to make is, that such a man is a *hypocrite*, a *dissembler*; his practice contradicts his profession: but the truth preserves its original purity; it is altogether *independent* of the conduct of men.

“A man (says *Monsieur Voltaire*) may love God, and yet kill his father; but it is impossible that the gospel can be true, when so many of its professors live in all kinds of debauchery.” This is a piece of *Voltaire's* common *rant*; it is a proof of the weakness, or rather of the enmity, of his own mind at God and revealed religion, but it is no argument against the truth. It is no argument against the skill of a physician, that his patient will not follow his prescriptions: this will prove the patient to be self-willed and refractory; but the fitness of the medicines, and the skill of the physician, are altogether unaffected. A bad practice is an argument against a man's sincerity; it proves that he doth not believe, that he doth not feel the truth; but it is no argument

against the gospel itself. Wherever the truth is known and believed, it will have a holy and purifying efficacy on the temper and conduct. *Now ye are clean through the word. We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. Seeing ye have purified your hearts by believing the truth to the unfeigned love of the brethren. Ye love one another with a pure heart fervently*.*

2d. *Partial views of the divine perfections, and limited views of the divine government, are causes of deism.*—God is a being possessed of all possible perfections; he is not only good, wise, and powerful, but he is infinitely holy and just. Now, as God is thus possessed of all possible perfection, he must regulate his moral government of the universe by a regard to the whole. It would be unworthy of God to exercise his goodness and power, to the disparagement of his justice and holiness: it would be equally unworthy of God to display his justice and holiness at the expence of his goodness and mercy. It hath been by not attending to this enlarged view of the divine perfections and government, that thousands of men

* What weakness, then! what sophistry! what villainous and priestly juggling is it in Mr P. (page 12.) to say, that the Bible hath “served to corrupt and brutalise mankind!” Mr P. and the *deists* pretend to be men of reason; but it would be as reasonable to argue, that there is no water in the *Ohio*, because it is sometimes darkened and thickened by a land flood, or by the building of the *Baver*; that there is no gold in the mines of *Mexico* and *Peru*, because it is mixed with alloy. Such reasoning is nothing but the *froth*, the *scum* of a rank moral depravity: For he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall know i. e. he shall have a heart-felt and happy experience, of my doctrine, whether it be of God.

men have commenced deists : they measure the dispensations of God by one, and not by all the divine perfections ; and then, like *Mr P.* they *snarl* at every thing which doth not tally with their own contracted views. When the Bible tells us, that the Hebrews *borrowed* the golden ear-rings, &c. of the Egyptians, the *deists* cry out, that God is a God of goodness, of untainted moral justice, and that such a conduct was altogether unworthy of the divine theocracy. But the Hebrew word rendered *borrow* signifies to receive, without implying any promise to refund or return. God, too, is the sovereign disposer of all property ; and it is every way worthy of God to transfer property from one man to another. But it would have been unworthy of the theocracy, if the Hebrews had done otherwise : they had not only been oppressed, but the Egyptians had with-held their wages. The Hebrews were *outlaws* in that country, and could not compel them before the courts of justice : but this could never cut down their right upon the great and eternal principles of common equity. The command, then, given to the Hebrews, to borrow of the Egyptians, was in every view worthy of the theocracy ; it was the voice of Heaven, interposing between the oppressor and the oppressed ; it was a practical exemplification of that great natural principle, *Render to all their due.* *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.* It is equally a proof of the divinity of the scriptures, and of the purity of the divine government.

It is owing to such partial and limited views of the divine government, that the deists take so much offence at the expulsion of the Canaanites, and giving their land to

the Hebrews: like Mr Paine, in other instances, the deists either beg or mistake this question. It is mistaking the question to ask, What right had the Hebrews to drive out the Canaanite, and take his property? It is begging the question to ask, Was it not partial and unworthy of God, to establish one nation on the ruins of another? The question about the expulsion cannot, and ought not to be argued from any national right, from the right of first possession, nor from the right of invasion* or conquest: the Hebrews never alledged, nor set up any claim to the land of Canaan, either civil or religious. But the great and only question is, What are the rights of God, as Lord of the universe, as the moral governor of the world? Whether is it becoming his moral government to punish one nation by the sword of another, for the grossest immoralities? Now, the history of the Canaanites on the one hand, and that of the Hebrews on the other, fully shews that this is the great question at issue. God could have destroyed the idolatrous Canaanites in a moment, by fire from heaven, as in the case of Sodom; or sunk them by an earthquake, as in the instance of Corah and his company: but in driving them out by little and little, by the sword of the Hebrews, he displayed his goodness and mercy; he waited their repentance and reformation. So he gives it as a reason for his long suffering, that the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. In destroying them finally, God manifested the purity and holiness of his government.—This, too, fully

* See Lowman's Intention of the Civil Government of the Hebrews.

fully appears from the history of the Hebrews ; for no sooner did they fall off into the idolatry of the nations, than they were carried twice captive, and severely punished by a foreign power.

This short review fully shews what was the great intention of the theocracy in the expulsion. It was not wantonly to reduce and cut down any right of the Canaanites : it was not to announce, to force, or establish any claim of the Hebrews ; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ; and all other rights are out of the question : but it was to preserve the knowledge, and worship, and obedience of the one true God, and testify the purity of the divine government by the punishment of idolatry.—What sophistry, then, is it in the deists to quarrel with a mere nonentity ; to bring the charges of cruelty and partiality against the government of God, in the very instance where it is deeply marked with long-suffering, goodness, mercy, purity, and every other feature that is worthy of God. The deists, like Mr P. bewilder themselves in a smoke of their own raising, and then they ascribe the darkness to the meridian sun. If God were to address such unreasonable * and wicked men

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* There is not one dispensation of providence, either merciful or wrathful, recorded in scripture, but what is every way worthy of God as the moral governor of the world, if Mr P. and the other *deists*, will measure it by all the divine and *known* perfections : and to argue on more confined principles is unfair ; it is unreasonable ; it is wicked. I shall suppose Mr P. to sit for his picture : how would he take it, and what would he say, if, instead of giving the world a full face, the limner were to draw only the

half

by an audible voice from heaven, 'it would be in such awful words as these: *Are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*

On the same ignorant and narrow principles, Mr P. (page 33.) reprobates the ATONEMENT of Jesus Christ, as an outrage offered to the moral justice of God, by supposing him to make the innocent suffer for the guilty.—This objection of Mr Paine's, is one of the grossest *sophisms* that ever blurr'd and disgraced the annals of literature. It proceeds on the mistaken idea, that Jesus was no more than a mere man; that he died in the solitary character of an individual; and that, instead of dying willingly, God, as Mr P. expresses it, "employed men to kill him."

If these ignorant suppositions were true, Mr P.'s reasoning would be conclusive, for God hath expressly declared, that *the innocent shall not suffer for the guilty, but every man shall die for his own sins.* As proof of this, we find, that God not only finally stop't short Abraham when about to sacrifice Isaac; but one of the great laws given by God to the Hebrews, and founded on moral justice,

half of his forehead, the third part of his nose, one of his eyes, and a part of his chin? Mr P. would cry out against such a conduct as a gross outrage on fact; he would reckon it impossible for the world to form any idea of him from such a mutilated daubing; and is it not an unspeakably greater outrage in Mr P. to argue as he does, that because God is good and merciful, his wrathful dispensations are cruel and partial, marked with "vindictiveness," and "indiscriminate revenge?"—In the words of that great poet, *Dr Young*, "A God all mercy is a God unjust."

justice, is, that they were *not* to cause their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, after the manner and abomination of the heathen. But the case is quite different with respect to Jesus Christ; he was true God, and so had his life at his own disposal; he did not die as an individual, but in a public character, as the surety and representative of his people: so we find his death always held out as *vicarious*, as undergone not on his own account, but in the room and stead of others.—Though Christ personally was innocent, as a public character and surety he was guilty. *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all: he bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* When Christ died, too, it was not of necessity, but of his own free choice; his death was not, properly speaking, passion, but was a great and godlike action; and in this way it differs from the death of common men. When men die, they must do it, because they cannot do otherwise; they have *no power to retain the spirit*. But the death of Christ was all action; hence, at the same time when the inspired writers represent God as delivering him up, as *not sparing him* *, they also represent the Lord Christ as actively giving up himself; *He gave himself a ransom for all; he bowed the head, and GAVE UP THE GHOST.*

These great considerations fully shew, that the death and atonement of Christ is perfectly consistent with God's moral justice †. Hence we find the Lord Christ clearing
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* Rom. viii. 32.

† Mr P. (page 20.) makes a groundless and mechanical distinction, when he says, that redemption hath for its basis an idea of *pecuniary*, and not of *moral* justice. Mr P. may cut down justice
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and justifying the divine government : he doth not blame his father, as Mr P. *wickedly* says, for " employing men to kill him : " he doth not charge his death *primarily* on the cowardice of the disciples ; on the treachery of Judas ; on the villainy of Pilate and the sanhedrim. All these were only instruments permitted ; and though the permission doth not extenuate their sin, he himself clears the divine government : *The Son of man came TO GIVE HIS LIFE a ransom for many. NO MAN taketh my life from me, but I LAY IT DOWN of myself.*

3d, *Seeming contradictions* in scripture. Sometimes the scripture seems to contradict itself, but there is no real contradiction : our Lord, for instance, says, *Lo I am with you always* ; and yet he says, *It is needful for you that I go away.* In one place he says, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* ; in another, *Except a man hate his father and mother, &c. he cannot be my disciple.* Paul says to the Romans, *By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified.*—

James

like minced pies ; like the old scholastic writers, he may talk of remunerative, distributive, and, like himself, of pecuniary justice : but there cannot be two kinds of justice. As the moral law arises from the nature of God, which is one, there is none other but *moral justice*. The same moral justice which says, *Thou shalt not kill*, also binds men to pay their debts, and says, *Owe no man any thing.*—What sophistry, then, is it in Mr P. to suppose, that moral justice will allow another to pay his debts, but not to suffer in his stead. Mr P. makes a distinction without a difference : he, in fact, admits that another man may pay his debt ; and, as there is no justice but moral justice, he must also admit, that, it may take another to suffer in his stead.—*Pecuniary justice* is Mr Paine's " Lingo ; " his contrivance and application of it are his " Legerdemain."

James says, *Ye see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.* But these, and all other seeming contradictions in scripture, may be reconciled by considering, that these different passages either speak of different things, or of different views of the same thing. In the first text above quoted, our Lord says, *Lo, I am with you always*; he intends that he would always be with his church, by his gospel, and by the power of his spirit. In the other text, when he says, that it was needful for his disciples that he should go away, he means in respect of his bodily presence on earth. *Paul* and *James* do not contradict one another; for though they speak of the same justification, it is with *very* different views. When *Paul* says, that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified, he is evidently speaking of personal justification before God, and renounces all works as the conditions of it. *James* is speaking not of personal justification *simply* in itself, but of the *manifestation* or evidence of it before men; he supposes and admits *Paul's* doctrine respecting justification before God, but insists that no man can have evidence, or certainty of this, by mere pretences to faith, without seeking and manifesting the truth of it by good works: and so he says, *A man is justified by works*, i. e. a man hath evidence in himself, and manifests his justification to others by works, and not by faith only.

In this way, all seeming contradictions in scripture may be reconciled. Sometimes a thing is said to be done by different persons, and in different places, when it was partly done by some persons in one place, and partly by the same persons in another place. In historical accounts, kings are sometimes said to begin their reign when they
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begun to govern with their father, and sometimes when they begun to reign by themselves. In one place, Solomon's brazen sea is said to contain two thousand baths; in another, three thousand: but the meaning is, that two thousand was the quantity generally in it for use; whereas three thousand was the whole content, or what the vessel would hold when brimful. In the 1st book of Kings, we are told, that there was nothing in the ark but the tables of the law. In the epistle to the Hebrews, we are told, that there was in it the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. But when we compare the two passages, the meaning is, that nothing but the tables were within the ark; and the other things were laid up upon its face or side.

How weak, then, is it in Mr P. and the other deists, to *boggle* at shadows; to take offence at such seeming contradictions, when they are so easily reconciled. If four of Mr Paine's friends were to write his life, they would all agree in the leading facts, but every one would have his own way of telling his story; and owing to this, they might seemingly contradict each other; but how unreasonable would Mr P. reckon it, if, on that account, posterity should renounce the whole story; deny that ever there was such a man as Mr P. or such writers of his history. The seeming contradictions in scripture, the *un-*formal manner in which they are written, is to me at least one proof of their divinity; because, in this way, they call forth and employ the reason of man. In the works of creation, we must exercise our reason, in order to discover the principles of science; to find the magnitude and distance of the heavenly bodies; to arrive at a proper

proper chemical analysis of particular substances: and if the Bible did not exercise our reason, as well as touch our hearts, it would be an *oddity* in the works of God; it would be wanting in that analogy which the reason of man very properly expects to find in all the works of the same Great Maker.

4th, The *fears* of infidels themselves, and their *terrors* at a future judgment, are *causes* of deism. Nothing is more natural, than for the human mind to wish that not to be true, which will bring it to trial, subject it to pain, or involve it in any affliction. Now, the Bible tells men, that they are to be judged, to be punished for their sins, without faith in Christ, without repentance and reformation. Now, because conscience joins with scripture, and tells men that they are sinners, that they are not prepared to meet judgment, they wish to persuade themselves that such things are not true. *Felix* trembled at Paul's preaching; and, because he was not ready for the event of such a dreadful doctrine, he wished to defer the reception of it: *Go thy way, &c.* I will not say that all the deists are bad men; but it is very observable in the history of deism, that the greatest advocates for it have been men of relaxed morals: the characters of *Celsus* in the first, of *Porphyry* in the second, and of *Julian* the apostate in the third centuries, are known to all. *Count Brandt* informs us, that he spent some days with *Voltaire*, and he heard nothing from him but what had a tendency to corrupt the heart. *Rochester* was not only a deist, but his deism was founded on the depravity of his character; he was a most abandoned sinner; and, in our own times, we very often see that men become warm in their arguments against

gainst the Bible, in proportion to the quantity of gin and brandy which they pour down their throats.

If any person be offended, and say that this is scurrility, and not argument, I will exchange it for another: How is it that the most famous infidels have not been able to die in the belief of their creed? In the history of believers, it is very observable, that not one ever died lamenting that he had believed the scriptures too much, or walked according to them too strictly. In the history of infidels, we find thousands who have not been able to support themselves in their last moments; thousands have openly renounced their belief, and lamented, as they died, that ever they were so mad; thousands have tried to preserve their consistency and external decorum, but have trembled and faltered as they came in sight of the judgment seat.—Rocheſter recanted altogether, and ordered that all his publications against virtue and religion should be burnt at the public crosses. Hume tried to stifle and conceal his feelings, by playing at whist, and by a childish jargon about Charon and his boat. When *Dr Tronchin* was called to see Voltaire in his last moments, he heard Voltaire, as he entered the room, crying out, “I am abandoned by God and man!” When Voltaire asked the Doctor “What he thought of him?” The Doctor told him, “He was very ill.” “O! (replied Voltaire), I will give you the half of what I am worth, if you could make me live six months.” The Doctor told him, that, “He could not live six weeks.” “O then, (returned Voltaire), I shall go to hell, Doctor, and you must go along with me!”

Now, I have no animosity against Mr P.; I have no prejudice against the deists in general; my daily and earnest

nest prayer for all men, without regard to names and petty and invidious distinctions, is, *That they may be saved*. But I address them as reasonable men, and beg again to repeat the question, How is it that the most famous infidels have not been able to die in their principles? The fact itself is among us; it rests upon the most unequivocal evidence; the truth is, they fear a judgment to come, and most unreasonably try to get rid of their fears, by doubting and denying the Bible revelation of *that* judgment. The Bible, however, will never condemn a man, but when he is condemned by conscience, if his conscience be rightly informed; and, with the same parity of reason that the deists deny the divinity of the scriptures, they may also deny the reality of their own feelings, and the stings and forebodings of a natural * conscience.

5th, *Vanity*. A spirit of *singularity*, and a *mistaking* the province of reason, are *causes* of deism. Vanity † in every

* I know some deists who ridicule revealed religion in their cups, and to see them on the Lord's day feasting at home, or nutting and rabbiting in the fields, one would think them happy; but at other times their minds are so alarmed, that they cannot sleep in their beds; their faces are so ranged, and vacant of every mark of satisfaction, that they appear like criminals led out to public execution. As Mr P. is a *secretary*, I wish him to explain this paradox.

† Mr Paine's great and insufferable *vanity* appears in his so frequent EGOTISMS: he uses the great *I* no fewer than *nineteen* times in his 37th page; in his minute description of the *Orrery*, and in the naming the primary planets, things known almost to every school-boy. It appears in telling the world, that he keeps no Bible, and that he was at school with *Counsellor Mingay*. What

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every age hath been a cause of deism. A young man, for instance, finds his natural genius stronger than those of his own family or township: he learns objections against the gospel, and puzzles a *few* who are around him; that few acknowledge his superiority; they report the victory to others; they all agree that such a person is a *genius*, and in this way flatter his vanity. This leads the person to make bolder assertions: by degrees he gets into a habit of holding impious discourse; and, because he is superior to others in wrangling, he gives up the original conviction of his own mind to his vanity. This is no supposition. One can scarcely meet a nest of deists, but there is generally one *wise-acre* among them, to which they all appeal: by their appeals his vanity is flattered; by his answers they are kept in awe; they dare not think for themselves: and the dismal effect is, that of mutual deception.

Some commence deists from no cause but a desire of appearing singular. They possess nothing in mind or body to command the attention of the public; they have full pockets, and do not feel a necessity of depending on the promises of God: they have nothing to do; their chief business lies in flourishing a snuff-box, brandishing a cane, or lolling over a counter. They are equally ignorant of the arguments for and against deism; but they

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is it to mankind, or what is it to the cause of *deism*, whether *Mr P.* was at school with *Mingay*, or with *Jack-Catch*? It appears in his telling us that the *forbidden fruit* was an *apple*. The world never knew before whether it was an *apple* or a *pear*: but as *Mr P.* is *Secretary for foreign affairs*, perhaps this information hath been sent him by his old and trusty sovereign, *DIABOLUS*, the *Black Prince*.

wish to be singular by dissenting from the vulgar creed : they *damn these Parsons, for they are such fellows as they cannot understand* : they *never go to church but to hear the music, &c. &c.* and all this from no principle in the world but that of singularity. The same desire of singularity which leads them to expect public notice for tying their cravat or garters in a certain form ; for wearing their hat on one side of the head ; for going with their boots all about their ankles, and walking in such a zig-zag manner as to *splash* every person they meet upon the street. This ignorant, this good-natured singularity, forms their creed ; it is the cause of their deism. They have no reason for being deists, but their preferring the name of a *Blood* to that of a Christian. *Others* commence deists from their mistaking the province of reason : they meet with certain truths in the gospel, and, because they cannot comprehend them, they reckon it unworthy of God to demand their assent. But though the gospel contains truths above, it contains no truth but what is agreeable to reason. It is the highest instance of reason to believe whatever God reveals, if we know it as to fact, though we may not be able to explain the manner of its existence. Now, *revealed* religion stands upon the same foot in this respect as the *works* of God in creation. In natural philosophy, we know the fact of light, of the elasticity of the air ; but we cannot tell, we cannot comprehend, the primary cause of *these*. We feel by experience that bread nourisheth us, that fire warms us ; but we cannot tell the reason why bread should nourish us more than a stone ; why fire should warm us, and not ice. How *childish* and *futile*, then, is it in Mr P. to renounce the

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gospel-

gospel-revelation, because of its mysteries. We know the mysteries of the gospel as to *fact*, for God hath authenticated the truth of them by a reasonable and miraculous evidence; to know them in the *manner* of their existence, is not necessary to our happiness. If Mr P. then, *spurns* at the gospel, because it contains mysteries, he must also *kick* at the works of God in creation, and renounce them as *fabulous*, like Descartes, he may deny the existence of external matter. This reasoning is not mine; the LORD CHRIST hath set me the example. Nicodemus, like Mr P. doubted and paused when he heard of the mystery of *regeneration*. Now, how doth our Lord argue with him? *The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*—It is a very striking fact in the history of mankind, and I wish the deists to attend to it, that the greatest philosophers * have been the firmest believers in the Bible revelation. On the other hand, we universally find, that *smatterers* in science, and *smatterers* in religion, are always the greatest *wranglers*. In the words of Mr Pope,

“A little learning is a dangerous thing,

“Drink deep, or taste not the *Pierian* spring;

“There *shallow* draughts intoxicate the brain,

“But drinking *largely* sobers us again.”

6th, The fulfilment of scripture-prophecy. When our Lord foretels the spread and success of the gospel, he also foretels the rise and progress of error: *Many false prophets shall arise, and deceive many.* When Paul is writing

* Lord President Forbes, Derham, Boyle, Sir Isaac Newton, &c. &c.

writing to Timothy, he says, *The time will come, when men will not endure sound doctrine.* But the most express prophecies respecting deism are these, by *Enoch*, and the apostle *Peter* : *Enoch* also, the seventh from *Adam*, prophesied, saying, *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to convince all, of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* The words of *PETER* are so pointed, that, if we did not know otherwise, we would be ready to think that he lived *A. D.* 1794, and stood behind *Mr P.* while writing his *Age of Reason.* *There shall come in the last days SCOFFERS, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*

Now, these prophecies have been, and are now fulfilling: all who doubt and deny the scriptures, are awfully fulfilling them to their own destruction. I am aware that the deists will cry out, *Why, if prophecy must be fulfilled, in our denying the faith, we cannot help it.* But prophecy hath no compulsive influence on the will of man: if it had, man would not be a moral agent; though he is a reasonable, he would not be a responsible being; and God would not be just in judging and condemning him. The prophecies of *Judas's* treachery, and of the *Jews* murdering the Lord of glory, had no coercive force upon their minds. Hence the inspired writers clear the prophecies; they clear the divine government, by charging home the death of *Christ* upon the voluntary enmity of the *Jews*: *Ye have killed the Prince of life; him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Ye have fulfilled them, i. e. the prophecies, in condemning him.* *Judas* him-

self publicly cleared the prophecies; he took home his treachery, as a free, a premeditated action of his own: *I have betrayed innocent blood.*

How ought this awful consideration to alarm deists! How ought it to confirm the minds of believers! The quibbles of deists are a strong proof of the divinity of the scriptures. The infidel may wrangle, and the atheist blaspheme, *but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.*

Thus, I have assigned the causes of deism; and from this short review, it fully appears from what principles in human nature it hath happened, that though the evidence of the gospel is so clear and strong, some in every age have ventured to doubt and to deny it. I shall conclude this third sermon with these awful words, and they ought to make the ears of all who hear them to tingle: *Mock not, lest your hands be made strong. Because I have called, and ye have refused; therefore I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.*

SERMON

SERMON IV.

DIRECTIONS.

On 2 Tim. iii. 16.—*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*

WITHOUT the formality of an introduction, I now proceed to the fourth and last part of the PLAN. In the first sermon, I proved the divinity of the holy scriptures: In the second, I refuted objections: In the third, I assigned the causes of deism: In the fourth sermon, I shall discuss the

IV. *General head of discourse*, namely, to offer a few *directions*, to which all Christians ought to attend, if they would be faithful to God and divine truth, and fortify their minds against the *painted*, but *hollow* arguments of *deism*. I call these arguments painted, because to *weak* minds they are sometimes *specious* and *showy*: I call them *hollow*, because there is nothing in them.

1. *See that ye be spiritually united to the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is indispensably necessary. I begin with this, because,

unless we are *born again*, we cannot see the glory of divine truth, and we have no security against apostacy. When a branch is only tied to a tree, it may appear to belong to it, but it will only dangle for a time, and in the end be blown away by the wind. In like manner, no man, whatever his genius, his knowledge, his profession may be, hath any security against apostacy, unless he is a partaker of the Spirit of God, and vitally united to the Lord Jesus. *I am the vine ; ye are the branches*, saith the LORD CHRIST. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me, for without me, or, as the Greek word signifies, separate from me, ye can do nothing.*—How doth the apostle John account for the open apostacy of many of the first professing Christians ? He ascribes it altogether to their want of union to Christ : *They went out from us, for they were not of us ; i. e. they were not true Christians ; though they knew the gospel, they did not believe it ; though they had been baptised with water, they had not the baptism of the Spirit ; for if they had been of us, they no doubt would have continued with us.*

There is one great consideration respecting the truth, which is a reason why union to Christ saves men from apostacy from it ; i. e. the gospel is the great mean by which the Spirit of God works on the conscience and heart ; it is the mean of conversion to God, and of union to Jesus. *Of his own will begat he us by the WORD OF TRUTH.* Now, men naturally love what conduceth to their happiness, and this is the case with all true believers : they feel the word to be the happy mean of filling them with good hope ; with that joy which is unspeakable and
full

full of glory; and this binds them to the love and defence of it. There are thousands this day in the church of God, who can reflect, perhaps, on this and the other word of promise; and the time was when they saw nothing in it; they wondered at the love, and at the growing attachment of others; but after that word became the mean of their own conversion, they would not exchange it for ten thousand worlds. *This word is my comfort in my affliction, and by it I am revived in all my straits.*

What saith the weeping prophet Jeremiah? He was persecuted for his attachment to the truth; he had every reason, humanly speaking, to renounce it, but he held it fast, as essential to his happiness: *Thy word was found of me, and I did eat; and it was to me the joy, and rejoicing of my heart.*—Pray, therefore, to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he may give unto you the spirit of revelation in the knowledge of his Son. Seek after union to Christ, as indispensably necessary to your holding fast the truth. I know, that what I am now saying will appear to the deists as *heathen Greek*; but *necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.*—Men must first be **ROOTED** in Christ, in order to their being *built up, and established* in the faith.

2d, *Take all your religious principles from the Bible, and not from the opinions of men.* This is Paul's advice to Timothy, in the context: *But continue thou in the things which thou hast heard, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures. Give thyself to reading.*—It is owing to not attending practically to this direction, that so many are so wavering and unstable in their religious sentiments: they

hunt from chapel to chapel; they hear a *Calvinist* in the morning, an *Armenian* in the afternoon; and, perhaps, are deranged and hurt at the whole of revelation, by the quibbles of some deist in the evening. They do not read the scriptures; they do not yield up their minds to God; they do not think for themselves. Such persons are as changeable as the weathercocks on the churches where they worship: they may be compared to children, who put every thing into their mouth, dirt as well as wholesome food. But, if men will fortify their minds against error, they must, like Apollos, be *mighty in the scriptures*; they ought to try the doctrines they hear, by the word of God, and receive or reject them as they are agreeable to it: *To the law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* It is for this conduct that the Bereans are so highly commended; they would not receive the doctrine of the apostles without trying it by the Old Testament scriptures: *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.*

Such a conduct, if universal, would be happy for the interests of religion: it would be useful to the hearers; useful to the ministers of the gospel. What is one reason why deism so much abounds? What is the reason why Mr P. renounces the written word of God? It is owing to his gross *ignorance* of the scriptures; he doth not know the particular prophecies respecting Christ in the *Old Testament*; he is ignorant of the particular and marked fulfilment of them in the *New*. What, again, is one reason why the ministers of the gospel are often so careless? Many of them neglect their duty, and employ ignorant

norant and licentious *birelings* in their place. What, again, is the reason, why some who dissent from the established church who profess orthodoxy, but are secret enemies to the truth, preach only in such a manner as to gain a salary, and save their own heads? They preach in such a dry and abstract manner, or in a style so pliant and indeterminate, that it cannot be understood whether they have any fixed principles or not.—All this is owing to the ignorance of the people. Let us, therefore, take all our religious principles from the scripture: *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God.*

But though man were not an immortal being, a regard to *civil liberty* is a reason why he ought to search and know the scriptures. The Bible, of all other books, is favourable to liberty*. It is evident in the history of *despotic governments*, that *despotism* hath always trod upon the *heels of ignorance*; it hath *robbed* the pockets, and *trampled* upon the persons of men. Whenever a people are ignorant, when they become so *sottish* as to allow themselves to be *priest-ridden*, the *priests* themselves have generally been the first to sell them into the hands of the oppressor. If, therefore, we would preserve our own freedom; if we would transmit true ideas of civil liberty to posterity, let us search the scriptures: *Prove all things; hold fast that which is best; be always*
ready

* If it were possible for a *madman* to write a book, he could not be more inconsistent with himself, than Mr P. in his different publications. *The Age of Reason* is a furnace prepared and blown by Mr P. himself, to burn up *The Rights of Man*.—Abhorrendum est omnibus,

ready to give an answer to him that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

3d, *See that your daily walk be holy, and strictly according to the principles of the gospel.* It is a beautiful observation, made by *Dr Owen*, that, "the practical knowledge of the truth is the best antidote against error." To this agree the words of the Lord Jesus: *He that doth the will of my Father, which is in heaven, he shall know of my doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* The more deeply a tree is rooted in the earth, it is the more secure against being overthrown by the wind, or torn up by the hand of the *russian* passenger; and the more deeply men drink into the spirit of the gospel, they are the more secure against error. This expressly agrees with the experience of men. Every person who studies his own heart will find, that the more holily he walks, he is the more happy in the word of God: on the contrary, when persons give over to any instance of conduct forbidden by the law, they are the more ready, for a time at least, to wish that the denunciations against it were not true. Now, if we would have a practical support against *deism*, we must daily walk according to the gospel. All the reasonings of a philosopher will not convince a man, that his daily food is hurtful to his health; he feels the contrary in his own experience. In like manner, when persons find the word of God to be the mean, not only of their conversion, but a rule for directing them in the paths of virtue; when they feel it a comfort to them in every adversity; this is an unanswerable argument for the truth of it. This was the manner of the Psalmist: *By the way of thy commandments,*

mandments, I kept myself out of the paths wherein destroyers go. What are the words of the apostle James? Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

This direction is level to the practice of the weakest and meanest of Christians. The greater part of mankind are not able to argue for Christianity; they have not time to canvass the evidence of it so fully, perhaps, as they could wish; they are not able to confront it, in a formal manner, with the objections of infidels. But it is in the power of every Christian, under the influence of the Spirit of God, to walk according to the truth; a holy practice is a *silent*, but it is a most powerful argument.—Let us, then, in all our secret, in all our private, in all our public transactions, take the word of God as our rule. In this way, our own minds will be more confirmed in the truth; for *the Lord meeteth him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness.* In this way, we shall give the best answer to our adversaries; *It is the will of God, that by WELL-DOING ye put to silence the IGNORANCE of foolish men.*

4th, Beware of admitting rashly arguments against the scriptures; but try whether they are sophisms, or sound reasoning. By sophism, I mean an inference or conclusion, drawn from principles which will not bear it; this is the manner of Mr P.; this hath been the manner of the deists in every age; and this must be the manner of reasoning in all cases where men endeavour to support error. Truth can stand upon its own legs; it doth not need the crutch; it needs only to be seen, to be known;

it needs only to be known, to be believed. It is quite otherwise with error. The more closely we look at truth, our conviction is the stronger, till it amounts to moral certainty : but as we draw nigh to error, conviction flees from us, till it evanishes altogether. Error always needs sophistry and wrangling to support it.—It is error and *sophistry* in Mr P. (page 19.) to bring it as an argument against the inspired revelation, that, “ the church hath set up a religion of pomp and revenue, in imitation of a person whose life was humility and poverty.” The question is not, What hath the church done? But the question is, What doth the scriptures call upon men to do? Now, they foretel, that if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution. Instead of a religion of pomp and revenue, it calls men to *be clothed with humility; to set their affections on things above, and not on things which are on the earth. Except a man forsake his father and his mother, yea and his own life also, saith Christ, he cannot be my disciple.*

It is *sophistry* in Mr P. to say (page 39), that, “ no system of religion can be true, that hath any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child.” For, though I were to suppose, but not grant, that revealed religion is *fabulous*, Mr P.’s principle, and his reasoning upon it, would *actually* disprove the truth of his own system of morality, suggested by the works of creation, and the relation in which men stand to one another in human society. It is shocking to a child to be stript, and whipped for his faults ; and as Mr P. values himself upon his “ exceeding good moral education,” he can perhaps, remember

the time when two or three hearty *thwacks* of the *birch* would make him writhe his face, and shrug his shoulders. Now, the existence and peace of society, though we had *no Bible*, require children to be corrected for their faults: but, according to *Mr P.* that morality cannot be true; it cannot have existence in fact, because the correction which it suggests is shocking to the mind of a child.— On the same principle, then, that *Mr P.* renounces the doctrine of the atonement, because he says it is shocking to the mind of a child; he must deny his own system of morality, because the application of it was once shocking to him, and is so to children. *Mr P.*'s reasoning goes to disprove the reason of man as an intelligent being, and his responsibility as a moral agent; it disproves the truth and existence of moral law as applicable to man; it brings him down to a level with the beasts that perish; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die!!!

It is rank sophistry in *Mr P.* (page 33.) to say, that, "*God changed himself into the shape of a man.*" When the Son of God appeared in human nature, it was not by changing himself, but by assuming the human nature into union with his divine person. So the same *unchanged* person is called *the Child born*, and *the Son given*, and *the Mighty God*, and *the Everlasting Father*: *he was found in the LIKENESS of men.* If *Mr P.* reckon this "a loose morality and low contrivance," he must say, that it is a loose morality and low contrivance for *God* to appear in the *works of creation*. The wisdom, the power of God, is as *really* manifested in the creation of a drop of water, a particle of sand, or in a pile of grass, as they are in the creation of the universe at large. If *Mr P.* then,

then, brings it as an argument against the *divinity* of the *inspired* word of God, that Jesus appeared in human nature, he must, on the same principles, renounce the *divinity* of the "WORD OF GOD IN CREATION," and instead of a *written* word, mankind shall have *no* word of God at all. O FOOLS! *when will ye be wise?*

With men of sense, the enemies of the truth generally employ ridicule and *buffoonry*; with the ignorant, they argue *sophistically*; they begin with the *weak*; they address the *passions*, and not the *reason* of men. Hence the apostle so GRAPHICALLY describes them in the context; *For of this sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive SILLY women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts; ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

5th, Remember that believers can *lose nothing*, though the Bible be *false*: but the *deists* run a tremendous *risk* if the scriptures are true. Suppose, for a moment, that the Bible is a book made by men, as Mr P. says; the believer in it can *lose nothing*: for who is the happier man, he that lives *soberly, righteously, and godly*, or he who gives over to the gratification of the meaner passions? The *libertine*, compared with the *virtuoso*, lives a hell upon earth; his line of conduct is unfriendly to society, for it destroys all the sublime and tender feelings of the human heart. Selfishness and positive cruelty are the never-failing effects of debauchery. *Henry VIII.* was one of the most *libidinous*, and in consequence one of the most *cruel wretches*, that ever disgraced humanity. It is ruinous to the libertine himself; it spends his money, wounds his conscience, exhausts his constitution; it

it opens for him an untimely grave. And if the believer is the happier man, supposing the scriptures to be false, what a tremendous risk do the *freethinkers* run, if the Bible be *true*; they shall be openly condemned before God, angels, and men; for *all that are in their graves shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation.* What man, then, in his senses, would chuse to run this risk? If the Bible be false, the believer can lose nothing; if his faith in it be *enthusiasm*, it is a happy enthusiasm; it prepares him for enjoying himself, for enjoying society in this world. But if the Bible be true, the misery of the infidel shall be inconceivable! BEWARE, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.

6th, Remember that men are to be judged for their principles, as well as for their conduct; God shall bring every work into judgment, with every SECRET THOUGHT. It is a fashionable sentiment, that if men live good lives, it doth not signify what their principles are;

“For *moder* of faith let angry zealots fight,

“His can’t be wrong, whose *life* is in the right.”

This sentiment is false; it hath done more hurt to the interests of virtue, than any other whatever. Man, indeed, is not accountable to man for his religious sentiments, before any earthly tribunal; but the law of God is spiritual; it condemns not only error, but man for believing it. Hence, the scriptures rest the Christian character, not so much on the *profession*, though that is necessary, as on the *belief* of the truth; He that BELIEVETH
shall

shall be saved. This is his commandment, that we should LIVE in the name of his Son. If thou shalt BELIEVE in thine heart the Lord Jesus, and that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

These are the express declarations of the living God; they address reason; they bind the conscience. Let us therefore remember, that, however decorous our external conduct may be, if our hearts are not purified by the belief of the truth, we are neither prepared for the practice of morality here, nor for the general judgment hereafter. Gospel-principles are indispensably necessary to the practice of every virtue: *A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.* The denial of any revealed truth will as certainly damn men, as the grossest immoralities. Never entertain any sentiment but what you could die with. *Mr P. is not dead yet!* Take all your religious principles from the scriptures; for, ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD. And now, brethren, I command you to God, and to the WORD OF HIS GRACE—not to Mr P.'s "word of the creation,"—which is able to keep you, to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.—Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to God only wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. *Amen.*

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ERRATUM.—In page 77 instead of "Celsus lived in the first," &c. read, "Celsus in the second, Porphyry in the third, and Julian in the fourth centuries."